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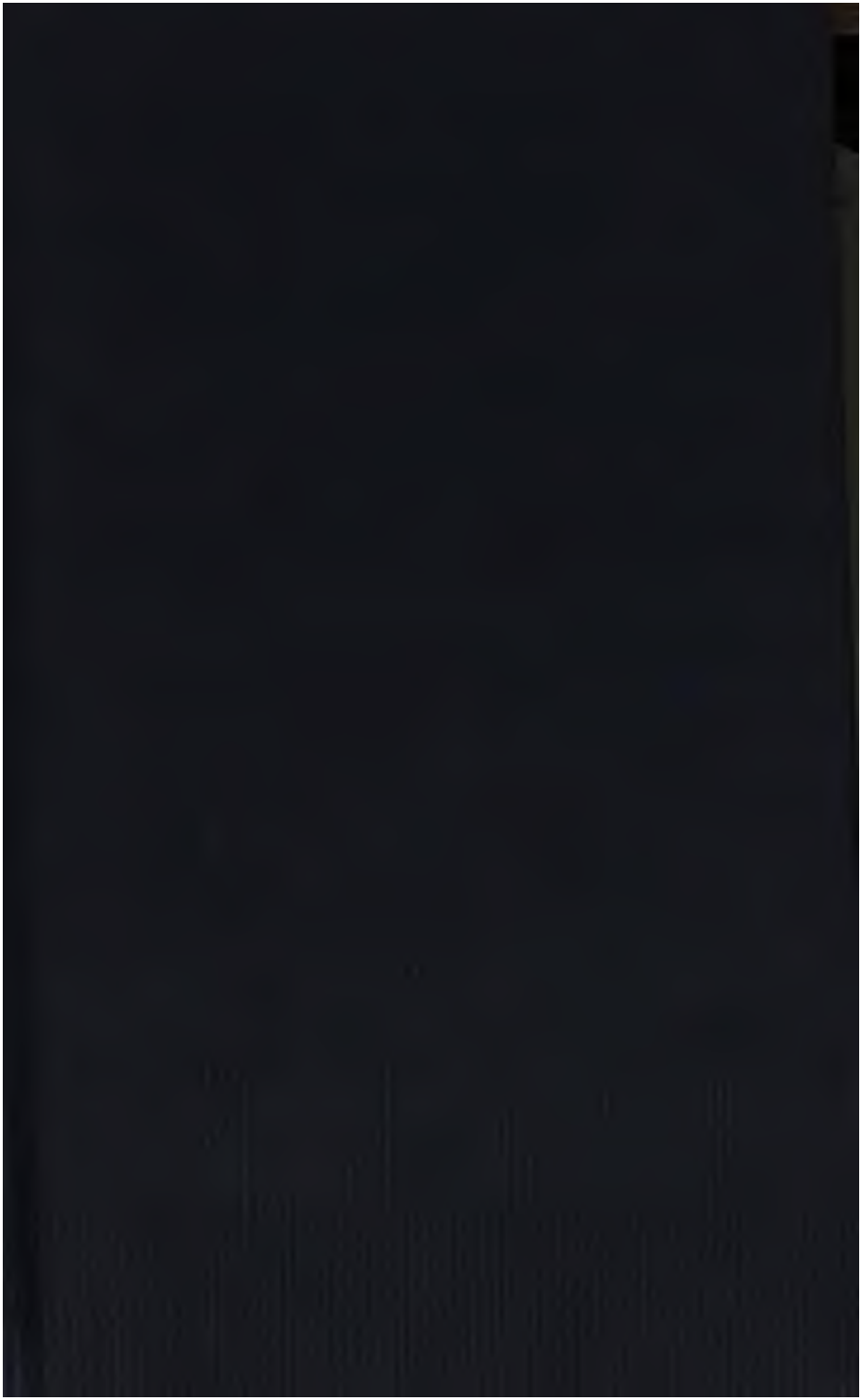

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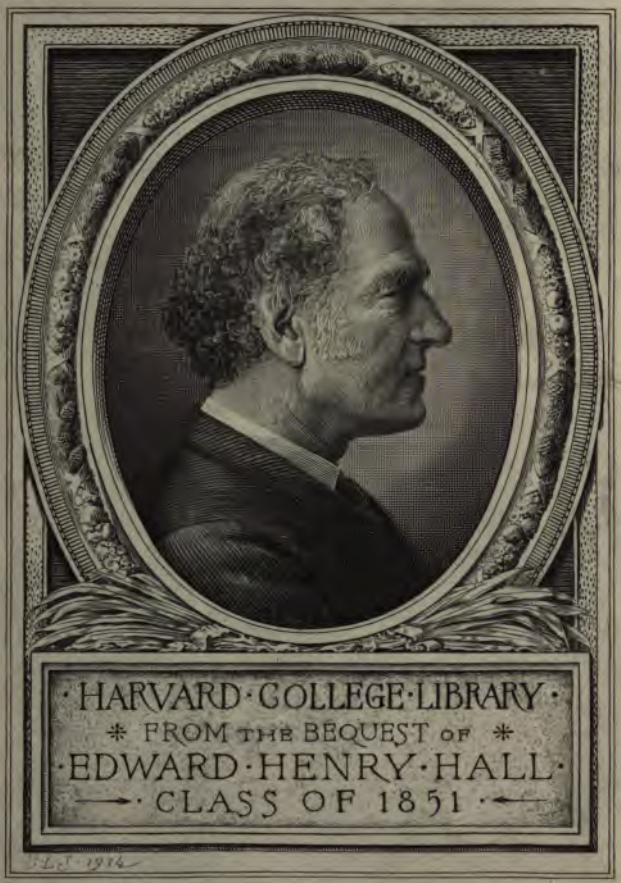
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MEMOIRS

OF

WILLIAM BECKFORD.

CHAPTER I.

CONVENT OF BOA MORTE—THE MARIALVA FAMILY—FINE MUSIC — EMBARCATION ON THE TAGUS — MONKISH BOOK — OROPEZA—CAMEIRO — MADRID—LADY BERWICK—THE ESCURIAL—VISIT TO DON GABRIEL—MADAM D'ARANDA—TURKISH AMBASSADOR.

THE valley of Collares seems to have been a spot which afforded Mr. Beckford a high sense of delight. His health improved every day during his rides among the fine scenery of the vicinity, that, as he expressed it, "called forth the liveliest sense of existence." He was not of a robust constitution, although his flow of nervous energy must have been considerable. Slender rather than stout, he had nothing of weight or muscular power in his frame or appearance. Sensitive and alive to the slightest cause of emotion, he was quick to anger, to pity, or to

pleasure. In the vicinity of Collares the charming rides and walks, among copses of chestnut and fertile orchards, to wild spots where the bay and citron growing wild, overhung the rocky margin of the brook which runs through the valley, dropping fruit and blossom alike into the crystal beneath, were peculiarly attractive. He found he could ride for miles along the bank of that delightful stream, enjoying the delicious perspective between flowery thickets and stems of poplar and walnut;—the whole seeming the resort of the happy, as poets depict the fields of Elysium. Mossy fragments of rock, grotesque trunks, and rustic bridges, were continually encountered, recalling the Savoy and Swiss scenery to his imagination, where he had for several successive years enjoyed so much pleasure, terminated by an irreparable loss. In Portugal, however, the character of the vegetation was altogether exotic. The vivid green of the citron, the golden-coloured orange, the myrtle blossom, and the rich fragrance of the turf, embroidered with aromatic flowers, brought to recollection the garden of the Hesperides. So strong was his feeling of delight in this beautiful region, that he was loth to leave it, after a sojourn of eight months. His visit had soothed his feelings after his wife's loss, and as

new scenes do in such cases, taking off the keen edge of sorrow, substituted a sad and melancholy regret in its place. So strong was the attraction of the country he was about to quit, that he was twenty times on the point of revoking the orders he had given for setting out homewards, remarking, that "such is the perversity of human nature, that objects appear the most estimable precisely at the moment when we are going to lose them." He alluded to the voluptuous listlessness felt in the climate, a desire to remain "imparadised in one delightful spot, which, in classical fiction, was supposed to render those who had tasted of the lotos forgetful of country, of friends, and of every tie."

Rambling, on one occasion, alone, amid such scenery, soon after sunrise, hour after hour passed away, before he could leave the odoriferous bay trees under which he had lain down. If he followed the paths they were firm and hard, and with the umbrage above, reminded him of the account of the groves of Tongataboo in Cook's voyages. Thus he complained of lingering away his time. There was plenty of fruit above his head, but it was not ripe. He felt hungry, and was beginning to wish himself in a less romantic region, when he heard a powerful female voice echoing among the green avenues, and

soon saw a ruddy young peasant girl in brown and scarlet, driving before her a mule laden with enormous panniers of grapes. "To ask for some and compliment the driver was of no use," said Mr. Beckford; "she replied, 'We all belong to Senhor José Dias, whose farmyard is half a league distant. There, Senhor, if you follow that road, you will soon reach it, and the bailiff, I dare say, will be proud to give you as many grapes as you please. Good morning. Happy days to you!'" On arriving at the wicket of a rude, dry wall, an enclosure of a very coarse character externally, he found in the yard within, besides a numerous stock of farm animals, cakes of savory bread, and ranges of beehives, long pillared sheds entirely tapestried with purple and yellow muscadine grapes, half candied, hung up to dry. Here he received a hearty welcome, and with real hospitality, amid several chubby-faced children, obtained walnuts fresh from the shell, bowls of milk, and the best cream cheeses made after the mode of the province of Alentejo. Here he fancied himself transported to patriarchal times, and never more enjoyed a few hours of delightful calm. "Here," thought I, "am I out of the way of courts and ceremonies, and common-place visitations, or salutations, or gossip," winding up with the remark, "Alas!

how vain is all one thinks or says to oneself nineteen times out of twenty."

The foregoing reflection proved its vanity a short time after it had passed through his mind, for soon afterwards a cracking of whips, and shouting, and trampling horses aroused him. Luis de Miranda, colonel of the Cascais regiment, an intimate friend of the Prince of Brazil, broke in upon him with many obliging reproaches for having left Ramalhaô the morning he had come to dine, and to propose afterwards a ride to a particular point of the Cintra mountains, which commanded such a prospect as was rarely to be seen in Portugal. Accordingly the recluse left his retirement, and was taken to one of the most expansive views of sea, plain, and mountain which he had ever encountered.

After the foregoing landscape he observed in the distance a sort of caravan, which was stated o be the Prince of Brazil and a shooting party, and was told the Prince wished to have an interview with him in perfect incognito. This interview accordingly took place with his Royal Highness, at first regarding certain optical instruments, from which he gradually went into politics. He touched upon Pombal and his measures * — lamented the backward state of

* See Spain and Portugal, vol. ii. p. 224.

his country—spoke of his own correspondence with Joseph the Second of Germany, and of information he derived from the Duke d'Alafoens. Mr. Beckford soon fathomed his drift, and listened, not without interest, but with great apparent complacency, to the Prince's communication. He also detailed some apparently perilous designs, proceeding with increased impetus in his communications. He showed the priest-ridden policy of Portugal, and its military defects. Non-approving, yet condemned to listen, till the royal proposer of questions answered them himself as they were uttered, Mr. Beckford bowed and nodded, so that his looks seemed to satisfy the Prince. The scene thus proceeded until the dew fell, when the Prince retired, and Mr. Beckford rode away. On returning to his villa at Ramalhaô, at first he threw himself upon a sofa to meditate, but in a little time got up and drove to the palace to his friend, the archbishop confessor, to whom he related what had just occurred, and the consequences it would appear were some time afterwards developed.

Another sight was the Convent of Boa Morte, whither Mr. Beckford went to hear a renowned missionary. The monks were a cadaverous race, full of devotion and austerity. He observed odd

examples of the effect of monastic life, and was glad to escape from the cloisters, and once more breathe the pure air, and be under the exhilarating blue sky of the open country. He went to see the new mansion of a leather contractor, built in the most tasteless manner possible, and retired finally to the verandah of the palace, washed by the Tagus, the day fine, and the view enchanting; vessels passing up and down the noble river, and almost touching the balustrades with their streamers. At dinner, great massy dishes were served up by a long train of gentlemen and chaplains, decorated with the orders of Avis and of Christ. The dishes were so hot and spicy as to set the mouth in a flame. A famous missionary descanted upon martyrdom and miracle, the confidants and the buffoons of the household peeping at the seven days' wonder, while Don Pedro, his sister, and the Marchioness of Marialva herself seemed to swallow the dose with avidity as the bounden duty of all of the true faith. The latter part of these tales were related amid the darkness of the evening, the children huddled together hardly venturing to breathe, and even the visitor himself, as he returned home alone in his carriage, shuddering under the impressions thus idly created.

The following day was the twenty-fifth of

November, 1787. In that fine climate the sun shone forth brilliantly, insects were fluttering and flowers expanding, after a rain that had produced a second spring. A rehearsal of Sequidillas occupied Mr. Beckford's attention until the hour of mass was over, when he drove to the Marquis of Marialva's, where all his family were assembled to dine with him; but he had hardly taken his place at table, before he was called away to attend upon the queen, a state of perfect slavery. Mr. Beckford remained with the family, and took his station in a balcony commanding one of the largest thoroughfares, and greatly infested with beggars. The Queen was at that moment going out, and drew their attention. Mr. Beckford went with the young Marialvas to the Salitri Theatre, where the very middling entertainments lasted above four hours and a half. He saw there in the stage box, the light-complexioned Countess of Pombeiro, with a black dwarf negress on each side of her, as if to set off her complexion. The ballets were well got up, and as nonsensical as usual, while particularly amusing to the sooty implings of Madam de Pombeiro, whose contortions composed not the worst part of the entertainment. The visitor returned to supper at the palace, passing through vestibules and guard chambers,

in which were snoring and jaded equerries. The old Marquis of Marialva had not returned, but the Camareira Mor and five or six hags of quality were feeding upon high-seasoned dishes, being cateresses of powerful intrepidity. The repast was splendid, and one mess had been tossed up by Donna Isabel de Castro herself, in a small aristocratic kitchen near the Queen's apartment, in which all the utensils were of solid silver. The number of lights on the table, the attendants and pages in rich uniforms, was surprizing. Mr. Beckford was surprized, too, at the good humour and frankness of the company. There was no reserve, and yet the higher orders of the Portuguese in those days were far removed from the admittance of any but their nearest relations to their family parties.

A remarkable trait in Portuguese families observed upon this occasion was the dutiful and affectionate conduct of the younger portion to their parents. "Honour thy father and thy mother" was carried out further in Portugal than in any other European country. It was impossible not to contrast this conduct with that continually observed at home. The company did not seem inclined to break up before two in the morning. Mr. Beckford took his leave under the escort of half-a-dozen torch bearers.

On his way out of the palace he was stopped by a messenger from the Archbishop Inquisitor, who had been prevented sending in his message by one of the attendants on the Camareira Mor, and had kept him airing in the corridor to no purpose. The messenger, Senhor Rocha, told Mr. Beckford that things did not go on as smoothly as they ought to do. He censured the Prince of Brazil, and tried to prolong the Englishman's stay in Lisbon. The latter stated he must go, that the die was cast. He was then led to the archbishop, up a little staircase, where nothing was heard except a groan from the archbishop over heaps of papers. He told Mr. Beckford none but an Englishman would have kept him waiting so long, and declared he was right in the information he had given. He said that the English were not what they used to be, that mischief was afloat, and he could see no end to the approaching confusion. Somebody's ears were poisoned whom he could name, referring no doubt to the Prince of Brazil. He then took an affectionate leave of Mr. Beckford, saying, "Pray God it be not the last embrace you will receive from me!" The melancholy foreboding was too soon recognised. In a few months after this interview, the Prince of Brazil, and his sister together, the latter married to

Don Gabriel of Spain, and lastly, the archbishop confessor himself,* whom Mr. Beckford never saw again, but whose virtues have been recorded by several English writers, all died. He now felt a greater reluctance than ever to leave a country where he had received so many flattering marks of kindness.

As if not to mend the matter in his frame of mind at that moment, he went the next day to the church of the martyrs to hear the matins of Perez, and the dead mass of Jomelli, which were performed by all the principal musicians of the royal chapel, for the repose of the souls of their deceased predecessors. It was the most grand and affecting music he ever heard. The audience seemed to be penetrated with the awful words the composers had set with such tremendous sublimity. Even the singers turned pale as they sang,—

"Timor mortis me conturbat !"

The high mass of Jomelli began with a movement imitative of the tolling of bells, and then the majestic sounds which followed struck him so much he could not refrain from tears. From thence he repaired to the palace where the old

* Who died, as reported, of the small pox, but much more likely of the disease called "The Church in Danger," the true cause, no doubt, of the Queen's madness.

Marquis of Marialva expected him. His conversation was serious. He entreated his visitor not to forget Portugal, to meditate upon the awful service he had just heard, and to declare he should not die in peace, unless he would come back to Portugal and close his eyes.

Resolved to return home through Spain and France, Mr. Beckford embarked on the Tagus the twenty-eighth of November, 1787, intending to cross to Aldea Gallega. Several English friends and others escorted him to the wharf or stairs at Pampulha, where he embarked in the barge of the old Marquis of Marialva, manned by twenty-eight rowers in scarlet dresses. They proceeded to the Venta de Pegoens, at two and a half miles an hour, a distance of five leagues, or twenty miles English, where they dined, and welcomed a blazing fire. They were next lodged in a palace, built in 1729 by John the Fifth, and found excellent apartments. Mr. Beckford rose at daybreak, observing vast desert levels gleaming with dreary verdure, and hastened out to breathe the morning air, impregnated with a thousand aromatic shrubs and flowers at the end of November. He at once determined to proceed towards Montemor on horseback, leaving the carriage and mules to follow as deliberately as they thought proper, full of admiration of the

vegetation and climate, broom, Indian fig, and laurestinas in full blossom, and bees humming among the flowers. He proceeded in the same mode to Arroyolos, where, at the house of the postmaster, he settled himself by a good fire, and wrote to the Marialva family.

It was singular that mandates were issued from the governor to supply the milk for the traveller's breakfast, the idea of which spoiled its use. Here the traveller bought a stock of carpets for his journey to Madrid, there being a manufactory of them at this place, employing three hundred persons.

Passing the Venta de Duque, a complete sty, the traveller proceeded by Estremoz, where there had been a fair, and heard an outrageous Capuchin sermon, after which he rode on horseback best part of the way to Elvas, saw the Fort de la Lippe, dined off delicious pork and quails, and conversed with a learned abade named Correa.*

He now entered Spain, and soon came in sight of Badajoz, where the custom-house people were all submission and goodness at the sight of his passport, it being such a one as was not frequently granted, in reference, it is

* The details of what took place here, and at other parts on the road, will be found in his letters on Portugal and Spain.

presumed, to the favour he stood in with the Portuguese court. He observed that the houses had grated windows, and that the inhabitants were muffled up to their noses in heavy, dark cloaks. A mob of eyes and mantles assembled round the carriage; all were smoking cigarros, their bodies concealed by their drapery. Mr. Beckford waded through mire to the cathedral, which was gloomy and solemn; lamps were burning before the altars, but the light was dim. The choristers were dressed as St. Antony is represented in the picture which hung by the miraculous cross he indented with his fingers in Portugal in the marble already noticed. The mosquitos were found here to be great torments, and the traveller could not help remarking the long and silky fleeces of the sheep. At Lubaon the traveller fell asleep, and was scarcely awake on entering Merida. There, to welcome him, wax lights were stuck against the walls, and perfumes of burned rosemary and lavender made his head swim.

Upon reaching Miaxados, the people received him with "Biva! Biva!" The courier had sounded the traveller's praises, and he was ushered into a sort of gallery, matted, with a handsome arched roof, and gilt chairs, the lady of the house making low obeisances, and her

handmaids singing tirannos most monotonously. The next day, December the sixth, the traveller reached Truxillo, a gloomy city, rendered more so by the remembrance that it gave birth to Pizarro, the ruthless murderer of the Peruvians. Beyond the city there appeared to be some pleasing rural spots, all the way to Sarasèços, whence the road lay through Almarez. The escrivano here, was a strenuous advocate of the Immaculate Conception, upon which subject he possessed three large folio volumes. Here Mr. Beckford took up a little old book, called "Espeio de cristal fino, y Antorcha que aviva el alma," and read in it until he was benumbed with horror.* Much of the description consists of a description of the state the soul of man is plunged into after death. The body is imagined to be conscious of all that befals it, and of its exchange of warm life for the cold, pestilential grave; aware that its friends have abandoned it for ever, sensible of the march of corruption, and hearing the voice of the accusing angel, who recounts its offences, and summonses it to

* It shows how impressive Mr. Beckford's imagination must have been at twenty-nine. We were curious about this book, and after difficulty, from no bookseller in Cadiz having a copy, we at last procured one in Valladolid. It is denunciatory enough, but hardly calculated to excite fear so much as strengthen superstition.—*Editor.*

the judgment of God. The work ends with an exhortation to repentance. The volume purports to be composed "by the licentiate Don Pedro Espinoso, presbitero, natural de San Lucar." It commences in a figurative manner. One who was travelling, a merchant by trade, lost his way, and wandered into a wood, where he met with a hermit. He got into conversation with him on his age, and asked him how he contrived to employ himself in his solitude. The old hermit replied, "I have been here thirty years, which I have passed in learning how to die, treinta años ha que estoy aqui aprendiendo á morir." Then the merchant replies, "It seems a superfluous thing to me for a mortal man to learn how to die. Yet I should not object to learn the art, pray teach me the art of dying well." So they seated themselves under a shady tree, and the hermit began the conversation by saying, "there is no other way to learn how to die, than to keep the commandments of God, and to fly from our sins. That man knows how to die who thinks every day the last of his life, and whom the fire of charity preserves from the dust of the sepulchre."

In this moral and unalarming manner the dialogue commences, gradually increasing the fear of the hearer, until the images introduced

become alarming, and the path to security is only to be found in repentance, prayer, and beneficence to the church. It is a singular book, but would hardly have alarmed the mind of a common reader, that was but ordinarily susceptible of such images. Still it is clear they haunted Mr. Beckford's fancy for several hours, and to dissipate them he mounted on horseback, and caught the fresh breezes that blew over the wastes of lavender. The birds were singing, and the clouds dividing showed long tracts of clear blue sky, as he galloped along a level country, dotted with woods of ilex, as far as the village of Lavel de Moral, where he found the inhabitants keeping the holy festival of the Immaculate Conception. Here he got into his carriage, which proceeded so slowly, that in his days of fire and fury, he should have "thumped out the bottom with impatience at their tardiness." He now fell into a profound slumber instead, and awoke at Calzada, near five in the evening, saw the sun setting in a sea of molten gold, and tinging the snows of a lofty range of mountains bordering the horizon for the first time. At their base lay the celebrated Escurial. The doors and windows of the inn at Calzada were open, but though it was December, no inconvenience was experienced, which the master

attributed to the supremacy of Spain over all other countries, though he acknowledged the mildness of the month was extraordinary. Passing through Oropeza to Talavera de la Reyna, he found there were some flourishing silk manufactories in the town, the only art professed beside that of singing to the hurdy-gurdy the most drawling tirannas he had ever heard. The town itself did not appear to be equal to the environs. He visited a fine old Gothic cathedral here, with carved stalls and rich crimson damask curtains over the high altar, casting a ruddy glow upon the pavement. He observed the convent of Nuestra Señora del Prayo with its octangular cupola skirting a fine lawn. He was obliged to overhaul his books to kill time, as the carriage dragged through heavy sands, and found no consolation among them. At Santa Olaya, the mistress of the inn treated him to a dance, which he was not sorry to exchange for supper and sleep.

Over dismal plains he reached Cameiro, and found a sweet-toned little spinnet, upon which he played, and set the owner in rapture. He visited the cellars of his host, and found there several casks capable of holding thirty or forty hogsheads; and ranges of jars in the shape of the old amphoræ, ten feet high and six in diameter. The weather

was foggy, as he approached Madrid; which through the vapour looked like a confused jumble of steeples, domes, and towers. A large building he recognised as the New Palace, at the base of which flowed the miserable river Mançanares; the banks were all in a flutter with rags set to dry, accompanied by a host of hags of washerwomen. Crossing a broad bridge over a very narrow stream, Mr. Beckford entered Madrid, the neat appearance of which agreeably disappointed him; and he was still more surprised, on entering the Calle d'Alcala, to find it a noble street, much finer than any in London. He took up his quarters at the Cruz de Malta, from its possessing a fine prospect. He was much struck with the spaciousness of the walk in the Prado; but found even then, in 1787, that the ladies' dresses and the carriages were perfectly Parisian, and that the ponderous equipages spoken of in the old Spanish romances were no longer visible, though devotion or its semblance still reigned there; for at the ringing of the Ave Maria bell, the coaches stopped, the servants took off their hats, the ladies crossed themselves, and the passengers stood motionless muttering a prayer.

In Madrid he found the Countess of Berwick, whom he had known when he first visited Paris

with his tutor. Her husband was no more, and had left her a noble palace and fortune. She had one son, to whom she was left sole guardian. Her palace front took Mr. Beckford's fancy as to the style of architecture, being simple and graceful. The visitor was conducted up a majestic staircase, having Corinthian columns, and then through a long suite of apartments, at the extremity of which he found the Duchess, in a saloon hung with embroidered India satin, reclining in her accustomed manner, as if she had never moved since he saw her before; the same good-natured, indolent being, free of malice and all uncharitableness. They talked over former times; and returning home to dine, he came back and took tea with her He observed that the angles in her apartments were taken off by low semi-circular sofas, and the space between them and the hangings filled up with slabs of marble, on which were placed beautiful porcelain vases with rose-trees and mignionette in bloom. The Duchess's daughter, Donna Ferdinanda, sat playing with a dog in her lap; and the young Duke of Berwick, then only fourteen, accompanied by a French Abbé, his preceptor, came in. The manners and address of the youth were prematurely formed, and quite French. This youth was heir to the house of Alba, and seventy thou-

sand a-year; and had possession of the Varagua and Liria estates, large properties underlet and very ill cultivated. The Duchess had not lost her passion for music. Music books were lying on the carpet; and two pretty little senoras de honor were ready to warble at the word of command. They sang delightfully; and their inspiration drove Mr. Beckford to the piano, where he played and sang the airs he had played and sang to the Duchess in his more youthful days, when she was pleased to listen to his rhapsodies hour after hour. The Duchess told him that he was a little sobered since, and might possibly get through the world without losing his wits upon its briars. "How fervid and ecstatic was I in those days; the toy of every impulse, the willing dupe of every gay illusion," he soliloquised.

For one of twenty-eight years of age, to regret his nineteenth or twentieth year in this way, would seem to argue a premature ripeness of the reflective power or bump, as Gall would have it.

He met in Madrid, once more, a pleasant, well-informed Spaniard, whom he had known in Switzerland, when in company with M. Verdeil, a mutual friend. He had built upon showing the stranger the lions of Madrid; and proposed going, while it was yet light, to the palace and

gardens of Buen Retiro. On arriving there they found certain oriental figures standing on the doorway; they were some of the suite of the Turkish ambassador, who lodged in the palace in the apartments once occupied by the singer Farinelli. Within, they saw his Excellency Achmet Vassif Effendi, wrapped in a pelisse of precious sable, playing with a cane, and near him a number of his slaves. Coffee was ordered, and served in cups of most delicate china, so thick it was difficult to swallow it. Some kind of eastern music was heard at the same moment, a mere repetition of plaintive cadences. The enquiries of Mr. Beckford about Bagdad, of which the ambassador was a native, also about the tomb of Zobeide, and the vestiges of the Dhar al Khalifat or palace of the Abassides, seemed to recal many recollections to the mind of this eastern diplomatist which afforded him pleasure. A few quotations from some favorite author, particularly Mesihi, made him exceedingly communicative, so that Timoni, a Greek interpreter, could hardly keep up with him. But the hour of prayer had arrived, and he rose to bid his visitors good evening, and retired to perform his devotions.

The Academy of Arts seemed to have considerable attention bestowed upon it in that day.

There were treasured up within its walls a large collection of subjects of natural history, and some rare curiosities from ancient America. There was also a valuable collection of casts from the antique, and daubings by obtrusive modern Spanish artists. The Prado and the Portuguese ambassadors were next visited; and the Spanish theatre, where the Barber of Seville being performed, a divertissement followed, characteristic of Spanish low life. One of the dancers so enraptured the audience that they made him repeat the dance five times over, in a manner that would have shocked a French dancing master. The women sat by themselves in a dim gallery, wrapped up in their white mantillas, and looking like spectres.

It was on a cold December day that Mr. Beckford, having stationed three relays on the road, to expedite the journey, set out for the Escurial. The Chevalier Roxas, a brother of the Marquis of Villanueva, was to be one of the party. They crossed the Mançanares and passed the Casa del Campo, a palace wrapped up in groves and thickets. Then they drove by the royal villa of La Sarsuela, and over three or four leagues of a wild naked country; and at length saw the white buildings of the renowned monastery and palace. The country he found better than that near

Madrid. Herds of deer were seen in the royal park before reaching the vast melancholy buildings. The first sight of the Escurial was impressive; grim statues appeared, dark and cavern-like, at the porch of the church, the cloudy sky rendering them more gloomy. The visitor had letters to the Prior, which were designed to open at once all the arena of the terrific building —the temple, palace, convent, and tomb, in one. A tall monk, with a forbidding countenance, whose appearance was as much as possible removed from cordiality, was the deputed showman. He scrutinized the stranger; observed to the Chevalier Roxas, who had accompanied the party, "He is very young, does he understand what I say to him? But as I am commanded to show him about, I suppose I must comply, though I am quite unused to the office of explaining our curiosities," with more in the same strain. Some vaulted apartments painted in arabesque were first shown, and then a vast hall, wherein was the Perla, the most delicate of the finished works of Raphael, as well as other pieces of fine painting. Among these was Jacob weeping over the bloody garment of his son, the loftiest proof of the artistic power of Velasquez. There was, besides these, a host of glorious pictures by the finest masters, covering the massy

walls of the conventual chamber. The doric choir surpassed any regal chamber in sober, harmonious majesty that Mr. Beckford had ever seen, looking more as if it belonged to a palace than a church. The stalls were carved in the sixteenth century, out of the finest wood the Indies could furnish. At the extremity of the striking perspective, suspended upon a black velvet pall, was the ivory image of the crucified Saviour, upon which Cellini had exerted all his art, ranking as his finest work. Here too was the little organ which was taken by Charles V. on his African expedition, an instrument of great sweetness, which Mr. Beckford tried under the frown of his severe conductor. The ceiling of the choir displayed the prodigality of the genius of Luca Giordano, in the whole hierarchy of heaven, of which imagination could scarcely conceive anything finer. Passing through chapels and doric arcades, mysterious cabinets, having relics of martyrs and other foolery, drew the attention of the visitors. That such a magnificent building should be devoted to such purposes, shows the greatness and the stupidity of the human mind, in close connection. Here, in a building on which was lavished all the wealth of Spain, and the genius of her art—here, among other toys, was a feather of the wing of the Archangel

Gabriel, three feet long, and skulls decorated with diamonds, not without some expressed doubts whether the stranger was quite orthodox enough to be worthy of the exhibition. This precious archangelic relic was viewed kneeling, without a word being uttered. The conductor did not say it was that with which Mahomet wrote the Koran, so the archangelic plumage must have doubly suffered. The tombs of the kings were visited by descending into the royal vault, down beautiful steps of polished marble. Running water was conducted through the sepulchral depository of decaying royalty, with its rippling chilling the spectator at the thought through what a precinct of death it flowed. The place of regal return into our common-place elements was a saloon, about thirty-five feet in diameter, and not marked by much impress of solemnity. The sarcophagi were, of course, rich in ornaments, in a place that from its decorations looked more like a subterranean boudoir than a temple of the king of terrors.

In the meanwhile the countenance of the showman seemed more and more ungracious, and the visitors took their leave, to the no small satisfaction of the friar. They were offered no refreshment; but repairing to the house of a friend of the Chevalier Roxas, they were

received with the warmest hospitality, and started for Madrid in the dark, amid cold, piercing winds, proceeding so rapidly that half the recollections of the Escurial had vanished out of the visitor's head before he reached his quarters at the Cruz de Malta. Though cold and tired, recollecting an engagement to a concert and ball, at the house of Senhor Pacheco, that very night, he determined to go, and put on his dancing dress for the purpose. There he found Achmet Vassif, the Turkish ambassador, and others, but felt little delighted with Turkish music, and actually volunteered to make one in a dance after the Spanish manner, which the French present severely criticised. There he became acquainted with a card-playing old Countess of Benevente, who lured fashionable people into play, in which Mr. Beckford joined for fashion's sake, but soon from fatigue begged leave to retire. Nothing could be more expressive of her play-going art on his taking leave,—the croak of a vulture scenting its prey from afar—"*Cavallero Inglez, a mañana a la misma hora !*"

The new palace front did not gain grace in Mr. Beckford's eyes. The interior court he described as of pure classical architecture. The doors and window recesses gleaming with the richest polished marbles. The walls thick and

fortress-like, while in the casements double panes of the strongest glass excluded the keen blasts which range almost uninterruptedly over the plains of Castile; thus sustaining an admirable temperature throughout all the royal apartments, the grandeur of which can scarcely be exceeded. As the King and Prince of Asturias, with their principal attendants, were absent hunting at the Escurial, and the Chevalier Roxas had joined a party of the body guard in another apartment, Mr. Beckford was left to ramble in solitude over the palace, surrounded with the works of the great Spanish, Italian, and Flemish painters. Not a door was closed, and he penetrated through the chamber of the throne into the old king's sleeping apartment, remarkable for its extreme neatness. He found there a book of pious orations adapted to the exclusive use of majesty, and ornamented with engravings. An enamelled picture of the infant Saviour, and of St. Anthony, by Mengs, was placed by the richly ornamented but uncurtained bed. In all the rooms were cages with gilded wire, each containing an exotic bird, some in full song, and with their notes chimed musical clocks sounding like the tones of harmonic glasses. In those apartments was the Madonna del Spasimo, or the representation of the Virgin's maternal suffering

when her son, fainting under the burthen of the cross, approached the place of crucifixion. The artist never attained such majesty of character in any of his other works, according to Mr. Beckford's opinion. He could not tear himself away from the picture, though aware that his friend awaited him; at length he left the apartment with the languid unwillingness of an enthusiast, whose mind is exhausted by the intensity of his feeling, and loth to arouse himself. This feeling, still so strong, shows how early and deeply his mind was imbued with a love of art, caught most probably from the paintings at Fonthill, in his father's valuable collection. In such a chance way often comes that preference for works of genius, which fixes the faculties upon one before another, making of that which has obtained the mind's mastery, the critical judge. Thus attaching its own peculiar regard to what first casually attracted the heart's deep feeling.

He now met one of the officials, who asked where he was going so fast, having before been sent to seek him. It appeared that the Infanta and Don Gabriel wanted to have an interview with him, in order to inquire about Portugal. The messenger presumed that this wish was expressed from the letters of which Mr. Beckford had been the bearer from the Marquis of Ma-

rialva, and more particularly from the Archbishop.

"You must kiss their hands this very evening. I am to be your conductor," said his friend Noronha.

"What! in this unceremonious dress?"

"Yes, I have heard you are not a pattern of correctness in these matters."

Mr. Beckford was at that moment in no train of mind or body for a courtly introduction. His head was full of the pictures he had been looking at, and the exotic birds, and had rather be presented to a cockatoo than to the greatest monarch in Christendom. There was no choice, and he proceeded to that part of the palace occupied by Don Gabriel and his Portuguese bride. The doors of sundry antichambers flew open before him, and passing through rooms peopled with biped animals the most uninteresting in the world, and some mere children, such as pages and lords and ladies in waiting, he entered a lofty chamber, hung with white satin and formed into compartments by rich embroidery, at the further extremity of which stood the Infant Don Gabriel, leaning against a table covered with velvet, upon which lay a case of golden antique medals, which he was contemplating. The Infanta was seated near him. She rose at once to

hold out a beautiful hand, which was kissed with unfeigned fervour. Her countenance was prepossessing, and she had the same florid complexion and handsome features which distinguished her brother, the Prince of Brazil.

The Princess said, "You have lately seen my dear mother, and walked, perhaps, in the garden of which I was so fond. Did you notice the fine flowers that grew there, particularly the blue carnation? We have no such flowers in Madrid. This climate is not so pleasant as that of Portugal, nor are our views so pleasant. I miss the Tagus and your ships continually sailing up. When you write to your friend Marialva and the Archbishop, tell them I possess, what no other prospect upon earth can equal, the smiles of my adored husband."

The Infant then approached with a manner so frank and kindly, that it exhibited no trace of senseless Austrian hauteur or Spanish stiffness, but partook more of the gentlemanly carriage of the Bourbons. The Infant then discoursed about books and the English universities, somewhat at the expense of the Portuguese academicians. He asked if English books were printed now as handsomely as in the days of the Stuarts, and said he was in possession of some that had belonged to Lord Oxford. The Infant had

made a translation of Sallust, which Mr. Beckford complimented. The Infant declared that he found the work laborious, and lost many a day's exercise in the parks and forests in doing it; but, such as it was, he had performed his task without any assistance, "though," said he, "you have, perhaps, heard to the contrary."

Noronha, Mr. Beckford's friend, who had introduced him, then began complimenting the Infant in the court mode, and the latter looked, as princes do under such circumstances, always more kind and gracious than before. The Infanta again reverted to her home on the banks of the Tagus, and was so affected as to awaken all her visitor's sympathies, and, while making his farewell bow, saw her eyes suffused in tears, while she kept gracefully waving her hand to bid him a happy good night.

The change of scene was not very agreeable. It shifted to another part of the palace, where there was a company of young Spanish officers, quaffing wine and rapping out Castilian oaths, until Mr. Beckford's friend, Roxas, who had remained with them while he visited royalty with Noronha, the last having kept aloof from the rioters, felt abashed at such a specimen of national manners.

In Madrid Mr. Beckford met with a Saxon

count, a singular character, who pretended to be a ghost-seer. This man was afterwards said to have been mixed up in some of the events of the French revolution, and to be the party in a mysterious passage in the first volume of Soulavie's Memoirs. He was an intimate of the Duke of Orleans, Egalite. This man affected to believe in the influence of constellations. He spoke of things he had seen and heard, to support his opinions, or else to make an impression upon the minds of others. He spoke too, of what he had it in his power to disclose, and promised future communications. Mr. Beckford's friend, Noronha, declared he did not like the man, and, besides, it was suspected he was a spy in full employ.

In Madrid Mr. Beckford met a nephew of Angelica Kauffman, the artist, who was himself no indifferent painter. They went together to meet a stranger on the Prado, and, not being successful, found themselves, while thus rambling, in front of the church of Atocha. Here they knelt and heard mass under some banners, on which was the British lion, trophies of Spain. At length they found the stranger of whom they were in search, a lady, carefully guarded by her mamma. They visited a villa which Rubens was said to have inhabited. There they met a

Vandal French artist, pouncing out the last materials of some of the great artist's works in fresco. This ruffled Mr. Beckford's temper, which he seems to have soothed by dining with the Duke del Infantado and his son in their nobly simple Castilian palace. He then visited the Turkish and French ambassadors, and was presented to Madam d'Aranda, who was found sitting with her sister and two youths, her brothers, over a silver brazier, in an apartment hung with bright Valencia satin. She had her apartments so lit up, that the magnificent furniture might be seen to the best advantage. The bed was of the richest blue velvet, trimmed with point lace, and beautifully shaped. It stood in a deep recess, hung round with an immense profusion of ample curtains. It was from seeing so many similar articles, and such a variety of furniture, that Mr. Beckford formed his own pure taste regarding the style of fitting up apartments: yet nothing could be more plain and simple than the furniture devoted to his own use. He seems to have formed plans for the arrangement of drapery in his rooms for the reception of company, of which he carried out some portion in what he called his tabernacle room at Ramalhaô, in the tasteful arrangement of plait and fold. The toilet of Madam d' Aranda

was designed by the sculptor Moite, and executed by Auguste, and was the most exquisite *chef-d'œuvre* of the kind he ever saw. She had all the delights wealth could afford, but was married to a man old enough to be her grandfather, and looked as pale and drooping "as a lily would be, if stuck in Abraham's bosom, and continually breathed upon by the venerable patriarch." From this lady he went to visit others. Then he had a long conversation with the Turkish ambassador, reciting to him again scraps of Hafiz and Mesihi, the ladies perking their pretty inquisitive faces into the very beard of the Moslem, whose solemn demeanour formed no bad contrast to their giddy vivacity. Here there was music and dancing, and boleroing, and fandangoing upon their carpets for hours without intermission. There were scarcely any board floors in the Spanish capital, and the custom of dancing upon rugs was in consequence generally established.

CHAPTER II.

JOURNEY FROM MADRID TO PARIS—PROPOSED MARRIAGE—PARIS MAGICIAN—LOUTHERBOURG AND HIS EXHIBITION—SECOND PORTUGUESE VISIT—ALCOBACA—MANIAC AT BATALHA—A TRAGEDY—PRINCE OF BRAZIL—THE QUEEN'S INSANITY.

It was the twenty-third of January, that the traveller prepared to quit the Spanish capital for that of France. In the latter city the leaven that produced the revolution was rapidly fermenting; and the chain of events which took place could not, it may be well conjectured, escape the notice of one só observant. He accordingly proceeded to Paris, on his way home, where, struck with the aspect of public affairs, always deeply interesting to him, he remained some time, having arrived there from Madrid in the early part of 1788. In the month of October in that year there were some overtures made

on his behalf regarding a second marriage, owing to the continued anxiety of his friends for a male succession. The lady was one of rank among the British aristocracy, and the intercourse was carried on by a gentleman, duly authorized, who was in communication with the lady's friends, after he had been induced to turn his mind to the subject. The lady was the daughter of a ducal house, and the overture was made through a friend of Lady Caroline S—— to her father. The latter, however, objected. Fortune and acquirements were not sufficient; rank was wanting, to render welcome an alliance with one of a family that, like many others, had been solely sustained in reputation by the first and last of the name connected with any thing above mediocrity, nearly a century before.

In Paris the state of society, the arts, the changes so rapidly following each other, the delight he took in watching events, and in observing stirring incidents of every kind, detained him in that capital for several months, until in the following year he witnessed the fall of the Bastile. It was a time that might well attract the attention of persons much less observant. Whether, in the interim between his arrival from Spain and that stirring event, he crossed the Channel at all, is uncertain.

Some of the incidents which occurred while Mr. Beckford was sojourning in the French capital are worthy of record. His regard for mystic sights and wonders, in fact, for any thing out of the common track of customary occurrences, was extraordinary. A tale of magic or pretended magic was certain to draw his attention. In London he used to converse about the experiments of Loutherbourg, and the deceptions he produced, as if they were subjects of great interest to himself. He once related that in Paris he casually fell in with a real magician, or, at least, a very old man, with whose appearance and manner he became much struck. The man appeared a mysterious character, and advanced in years. They used to talk together upon the subjects of magic and incantations, until the stranger, seeing the interest Mr. Beckford took in such topics, in which he himself seemed to take no less, he told him that, if he would call upon him, he could exhibit to him one of the most extraordinary things his imagination could conceive. The address he gave was in an obscure part of Paris. Curiosity and fancy for such things overpowered every other consideration, though the man was only a chance acquaintance. Mr. Beckford determined to go, and went accordingly. The approach to the

dwelling indicated was through an old timber-yard, which appeared to have remained long in the same state, the timber in many instances appearing to have lain long enough to fall into a state of decay. Passing through the yard, the visitor entered a sort of hall of considerable size, in which he met the owner, who had to sustain the character and support his averments of being a believer and an adept in magic. He had dressed himself in a mode to sustain in some degree that character. The apartment had tapestry hangings, and many ornaments in good taste were dispersed about. A flight of steps at the top of the room or hall led into a garden at the back of the house, and at the top of the stairs stood a large marble or stone vase, almost as large as the Warwick vase, filled with the purest water. Some unimportant conversation ensued, when the Frenchman bade his visitor look into the vase, and say if he saw anything whatever but pure water. He replied that he could see nothing else. The man then uttered some mysterious or cabalistic words, and all at once the vase appeared to be filled with an innumerable quantity of living creatures of the most extraordinary shapes and forms, as odd as those small, strange insects discoverable in impure liquids. The apartment, too, seemed filled

with various living and strange forms. He became all at once in a state of surprise and astonishment, from which, when he recovered and looked around, he could see nothing more of what had just attracted his wonder, and even the man himself had withdrawn. He never met the magician again, which might easily have been the result of accident, considering the convulsed state of Paris; but he always thought the trick, however performed, was one of the most mysterious and unaccountable that he had ever met with. He had no doubt of its being a trick; but it was admirably played off, and for what object but to startle him and remove his incredulity on similar subjects, he could not conjecture. He paid nothing for the exhibition.

The Saxon already mentioned as being met with at Madrid, and to whom he often alluded as the ghost seer,* was a mere talker. He had attempted to intimidate the incredulous only by his stories. Thus, speaking of one who affected to be a magician in Germany, he observed that his fate was terrible. "I passed a week with him not six months before he disappeared in the frightful manner you have heard of; it was a week of mental toil and suffering, of fasts and privations of various natures, and of sights suf-

* See his Spain and Portugal.

ficiently appalling to drive back the whole torrent of blood from the heart. It was at this period that, returning one dark and stormy night from trying experiments upon living animals, more excruciating than the keenest anatomist had ever perpetrated, I found, lying upon my chair, coiled up in a circle, like the symbol of eternity, an enormous snake, of a deadly lead-colour; it neither hissed nor moved for several minutes. During this pause, while I remained aghast looking full upon it, a voice, more like the whisper of trees than any sound of human utterance, articulated certain words, which I have retained, and used to powerful effect in moments of peril and extreme urgency."

This German was an acknowledged knave, a man of words only—the Frenchman was a man of deeds. It is clear that the country of mesmerism, and all sorts of isms, in the present day, is only now not quite as certain of preying upon human credulity by goblinism, as by arts which assume the semblance of something allied to natural history, or physiology, and less marked in the front by the furrows of antiquity.

It was in Paris, in the *Jardin des Plantes*, that the visitor ventured into the den of a lion, by no means one of the mildest, but it had shown symptoms of strong attachment to Mr.

Beckford, whom he had allowed to caress him through the bars. He was so pleased that he licked his hands with his rough tongue, and brought off the skin. This became a matter of notoriety in Paris, and a number of persons of the court went to see him repeat the experiment more than once.

His acquaintance with de Loutherberg must have been in some degree connected with certain illusions which the painter exhibited, and which took Mr. Beckford's youthful fancy. His invention consisted of moving pictures. He produced what he called his "Eidophusicon," which was assisted by music, but it did not answer. It was captivating to Mr. Beckford, when young, in 1782; and his attachment to the early things of life was remarkably strong. Loutherberg, too, produced in an exhibition a sort of magical effect in art; and here, again, a sympathy with such things was visible: Mr. Beckford had visited at the artist's dwelling, and saw them in private. To return to Paris.

Mr. Beckford watched the events of the Revolution with a keen eye. Some of the pictures of the scenes at that stirring time represented an Englishman on horseback, an apparent spectator of them, and that spectator was Mr. Beckford. After the destruction of the Bastile, in

1789, he returned home. He had thus far spent much of his time abroad. He had made the Grand Tour with his tutor before he was of age; and, returning home, remained a few months, until he became his own master. He had then started for Germany and Italy, returned home in 1783, married, and went to reside in Switzerland. There, in 1786, he lost his wife, and, in 1787, to beguile melancholy feelings, went to Portugal, to visit the old Marquis of Marialva, who had a great esteem for him. From Portugal he visited Spain, and then France. After the Bastile was destroyed, he came home; and, in 1791, visited Paris again. He was there at the death of the king.

In the same year he once more visited Portugal, through pressing solicitations from his friends in the Portuguese court. There was something flattering to one of his temperament in mingling, so much as he had done, with the first of the nobles in Portugal and Spain, besides being so strongly tied by friendship with the Marialva family.

It is to be lamented that he has left no more of the particulars of this journey than are comprised in his visit to the celebrated monastic establishments of Alcobaça and Batalha: the last seen by him in its fulness of glory, and

since destroyed by the French in their invasion of Spain by the army under Marshal Massena.

The narratives are the more valuable, in that they depict a state of things long since no more. Little else than the names remain. The superstitions are softened, the pomps and ceremonials abridged, and the vanities of the past have become little more than shadows to those of the present time, which are equally empty without the consciousness, however false, of that substantiality which made the older the more tolerable.

The visitor again took with him a considerable establishment. He set out, while on this his second visit, to see the famous monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha. The first is situated near the sea, on the little river Alcoa, and the second on the road from that place to Leyria, through Cruz de Ligua. He went in the train of two distinguished prelates—the Grand Prior of Aviz, and the Prior of St. Vincent. It appeared that these prelates were despatched upon a secret mission to those establishments, which was probably covered by the plea of showing them to the visitor. The party held their rendezvous at the quinta of San José, commanding the entrance of the Tagus, which Mr. Beckford had occupied. Dr. Errhart and the Chevalier

Franchi, of Mr. Beckford's household, were of the party. The Prior of St. Vincent seems to have taken the lead; of whom Mr. Beckford spoke in terms of the highest praise, as a cheerful, learned, and polished ecclesiastic, who might have figured amid the galaxy of talent at the court of Leo X.

The population of Belem, where San José, the quinta or villa of Mr. Beckford, was situated, came forth to witness the setting out of the cavalcade, which moved off under shouts of "Long live the Prince." "Long live the Marialvas, and all their friends into the bargain," meaning the English, of course. The Prior of St. Vincent led the way to his Convent of Tojal; and passing by Senora de Luz to Lumiares, they at length entered the woody domain of the Monks of St. Vincent, near which were bay trees with stems thirty-eight inches in diameter. A grand chateau was passed, belonging to the Duke d'Alafoens; and plenty appeared in the produce of the soil on all sides—a contrast, indeed, to the scenes of misery, the houses filled with starved skeletons of families that perished on the same spot in the contest between Wellington and Massena, changing into a desert a lovely and fertile district.

The first sight of Alcobaça was imposing;

but the village around it relieved in some degree the huge bulk of the conventual building. The inmates of the monastery, four hundred strong, were drawn up in spiritual array to receive the visitors, with the abbot at their head. The church was a spacious and austere-looking Saxon church; but the English visitor lost not a moment in visiting the sepulchral chapel in which Pedro the Just and his beloved Inez are entombed. The tomb somewhat resembled that of the Beauchamp family, at Warwick.

The visitors now proceeded to the kitchen, then one of the finest temples of gluttony in Europe. Through the centre of a hall not less than sixty feet in diameter, ran a rivulet of clear water, in a pierced reservoir, containing every sort and size of the finest river fish. Loads of game and venison were heaped up on all sides. There were rows of ovens and stoves; and there were vegetables and fruit in endless variety. A numerous tribe of lay brothers was at work, rolling out and puffing up the pastry in a hundred different shapes, and singing blithely all the time. The visitors were conducted to their apartments: the walls were naked; the ceiling gilt and painted: the floors were spread with Persian carpeting of the finest texture; the tables rich with velvet, and decked out with ewers and

basins of chased silver. Mr. Beckford had his own bed pitched in one of the alcoves, to the surprise of the inmates. Then the party was conducted to a saloon superb in pictures, and blazing with lights in sconces of silver. In the centre was an ample table, covered with embroidered linen, having four chairs for the guest and the three prelates. They were thus nobly banquetted. Perfumes scented the saloon; and music was introduced, being an endless succession of most decorous and tedious minuets. Early in the morning, the visitor got up and traversed the endless corridors of the monastery before a soul was stirring. He met, too, with a picture of Thomas à Becket painted by Velasquez. It looked the character of the arch high-priest in perfection. Some MSS. of the fourteenth century, said to be in the library of the monastery, could not be found; but some specimens of sculpture exhibited there were admirable.*

Provisions were sent on to Batalha, as the convent was poor; and the fathers of Alcobaça wished to do all honour to their guests. The repasts at Alcobaça continued to be as splendid as before.

* The Excursion itself contains the minute particulars. Published by Bentley, 1835.

The party took the road to Aljubarota, and crossed the plains where the battle was fought which placed the diadem of Portugal on the head of the intrepid bastard in 1385, when the Castilian cavalry, the pride of Spain, was driven down a ravine, and utterly routed, and the King of Castile fled to Santarem. Mr. Beckford could rouse no patriotic enthusiasm in the bosoms of those around him. The present, not the past, engrossed their attention as they swallowed excellent wine, and exclaimed, "Muito bom-primeroso! Excellente!" Great exhilaration prevailed; and all the English servants present were in raptures, and quite ready to change their creed, the wine being so truly Catholic. There was no wine like Aljubarota, Dr. Errhart declared wineology the best of all ologys, and the Chevalier Franchi mounted on horseback, and rode away as fast as the King of Castile to Santarem. The Portuguese, on the other hand, fell fast asleep. The slumberers were waked by Franchi being dismounted from his steed, fortunately not much hurt. The party, on arriving, were met by the poor and mortified monks of Batalha, who saw the hams and pies unladen from the sumpter-mules by those who escorted them, and who were the true elder sons of the church, concealing their conscious

superiority over their mortified brethren. The poor Prior of Batalha and his brethren were astounded at the bed, gauze-curtained, the superb coverlids and silver ewers in the baggage of the visitors. When the lights were unpacked, and the supper spread out, one of the poor brethren of Batalha was animated with the Aljubarota, and called out, "Well, this is as it should be—rare doings! never witnessed at Batalha since the progress of John V., more than half a century ago." He then concluded by expressing his belief that King John was in heaven. He drained his bowl, and was carried out weeping, and puling, and marking his track with his liquid sorrows.

Seated in his chamber-window, listening to the song of the nightingale on a bay-tree beneath, in the serene and bright moonlight, his ears were suddenly assailed by the sound of a human voice, and a striking incident took place which the traveller has recorded. The voice, issuing from beneath the arched avenues of a large garden, repeated the appalling words, "Judgment! judgment! Tremble at the anger of an offended God! Woe to Portugal! woe! woe!"

He was alarmed, and almost expected some horrible shadow to appear, when there issued from a dark thicket a tall, deadly-pale old man,

who looked neither to the right nor left. He sighed deeply, and continued to renew his cry of "woe! woe!" which resounded from the echo of the vaults and arches. At length the sounds died entirely away, and the spectre-like form retired. He felt his blood chill, and did not go to bed until daydawn. On the following morning the Prior of Batalha said, "You were disturbed last night, I fear, by a wailing voice proclaiming impending judgments. I heard it also, and it makes me shudder. Do not imagine it proceeds from another world. It comes from a member of our convent, an exemplary man, a scion of the great house of the Duke of Aveiro, of whose fate you have heard. He was then in the pride of youth, volatile as you appear to be. He had accompanied the duke to a sumptuous ball given by the English to the high nobility. At that very moment of pleasure the executioners of Pombal's will seized their prey, and this individual was among the number arrested. He was thrown into a deep, damp dungeon.* His life was spared, but in

* The history of the treatment of the Duke d'Aveiro records one of the most shocking crimes ever committed by those fertile in crime who have administered the affairs of any country. Pombal's determination to drive out the Jesuits, reckless of any means, made him sacrifice the

the course of a few years he became a wasted, woe-worn man, having emerged from his prison only to loneliness and sorrow. The blood of his relatives he fancies to be sprinkled upon all he sees. He never passed Belem but he imagined he saw the scaffold and the wheels upon which those he loved best were made to expire in torture. His hot blood became frozen. The world, the court, nothing more had charms for him. The sun had no warmth, the human countenance no smiles. Love and fear became alike to him. He gave up his soul to prayer, and renounced the world with the best prospects before him, and embraced our order. He has been twenty-eight years within these walls, fully impressed with the innocence of Pombal's victims, and the falsehood of the conspiracy the pretended excuse invented to justify such cruelties. The unfortunate man declares the troubles now taking place in France (1794) are the direct consequence of that pretended plot, and that the same troubles will travel to Portugal, and afflict a kingdom he believes to be foredoomed to destruction. He seldom speaks; he repels all news, avoids strangers, is constant

noblest blood of Portugal to frame an excuse. He was a cruel minister at a licentious court, and thought any means justified an end. He died disgraced in 1782.

to his duties, and severe in his fasts and vigils. He pays me canonical obedience, and no more. He is a living grave, a walking sepulchre. I dread to meet him, for he stops, pauses, and repeats to me the exclamations you heard last night, as if he were commissioned by heaven to deliver them. There are moments, I confess, when I firmly believe he speaks prophetic truth. Who can hear what is going on in France and not believe them? Yes, the arm of an avenging God is stretched out, and the weight of impending judgments is terrible. But what am I saying?" continued the prior; "I came to pray your forgiveness for your last night's annoyance. I have tried to prevent it before by persuasion; to have forbidden it would have been harsh,—even cruel,—it might have been impious to do so. I am convinced the spirit of the Most High moves within him. We dare not impede its utterance."

The repast which followed was constrained. There seemed a gloom over all, penetrating the atmosphere, and yet the atmosphere was all loveliness. The sky, an intense azure, was tempered by fleecy clouds, and discovered itself between the tracery of innumerable arches. The summer air fanned us, the fountain bubbled on; the perfume of the orange and citron flowers

was wafted from an orchard not far off, but still all appeared silent and abstracted. High mass was on the point of celebration. The party followed in procession through courts and cloisters, constructed with great skill of a beautiful grey stone. Boys in white were busy removing every particle of dust, a tame stork and a flamingo keeping pace with them wherever they went. The building was in excellent taste. All at once an oaken door flew open, and the party entered the nave of the church, which recalled Winchester, as respected the arches and mouldings, and Amiens in loftiness, but plainer and with fewer intersections in the roof. Richness of hue was not wanting; gorgeousness of tint, highly vivid, the splendour of golden and ruby light streaming through a long series of stained windows, flickered about in all directions on pavement and roof, casting over every object myriads of glowing mellow shadows, ever in undulating motion. Even the white monastic garments of the conductors seemed embroidered with the brightest flowers of Paradise.

These effects seem to have become early rooted among the objects which fixed themselves in Mr. Beckford's imagination. He well understood the theory of colour, and few studied better its effect. At Fonthill, at Lansdown, in

his town residences, something of the result might always be traced. No one equalled him in the colour arrangement of a vase of flowers. His drawing-room and library curtains,—in fact, drapery of every kind was marked by an arrangement of peculiar harmony, as if having studied music, he had studied colour from the better painters and the first musicians, and felt the art of pleasing the ear and eye with true judgment.

To break the chain of connection for a moment, it may be remarked that at a very early age Mozart had visited the Lord Mayor Beckford in London and Fonthill, and been entertained by him with the elder Beckford's usual hospitality. The son was then not more than seven or eight years of age. At that time he so much pleased the boy that he took a liking to the renowned musician, and afterwards determined to take lessons from him. When the musician had gone to Vienna, he paid that city a visit in order to see him again. His love of music was intense. He used to relate that the fine air "Non piu Andrai," in the "Marriage of Figaro," was originally struck out as a theme, during one of his lessons, on which the pupil was to compose variations. This he had preserved, as he did almost all the documents and

letters he received, and used to exhibit to his friends with exultation, never failing to sit down to the piano, singing the air, and accompanying it himself on the instrument with great spirit. Cimarosa was one of his favourite composers; and when in London, and his "Matrimonio Segreto" was performed, or the "Don Giovanni," or the "Figaro" of Mozart, he always attended, taking the score of the opera with him, and when the orchestra or a singer was in fault, he was so annoyed he would speak of it for days afterwards. The church music in Portugal, not only in the capital but in all the more opulent monastic establishments, was at the time of Mr. Beckford's visit the best in Europe, and at Batalha he seems to have been particularly struck with the effect of the chant. There was no pomp, no glitter nor splendour, but all was in character, a profound religious awe pervading the service, and impressed upon the countenances of the priests. The voices of the monks were clear and deep-toned, the chant simple and grave, its austerity mitigated in some places by the treble of young choristers, whose sweet sounds found the way to the heart, and recalled our own beautiful cathedral service so strongly, that he could not help weeping. His companions, too, seemed deeply affected, a thing

not observed in the proud, pompous, and rich establishment of Alcobaça.

In the foregoing frame of mind, well calculated to rouse melancholy, the party visited the mausoleum of John the First and Philippa, standing in the centre of the chapel, and that of the Regent Pedro, Duke of Coimbra, killed at Alfarubeira. From these tombs he withdrew with reluctance to humour the Prior of St. Vincent, who informed him that the Lord Almoner had set his heart upon an *omelette à la Provençale*, which he wished to be tossed by Mr. Beckford's divine French cook, whose master never moved from home without the servants he might require being in attendance. The consequence of this desire was, that they were hurried abominably through the royal cloisters, a glorious square of nearly two hundred feet, surrounded by rich tracery, as quaint as any of the ornaments of Roslin Chapel, but much more elegant. The ramifications it was impossible to praise too highly. Everything, too, was carefully preserved in the most retired corners; not a weed nor lichen appeared anywhere, and the ventilation was admirable. The Chapter House, a square of seventy feet, with an arched roof supporting itself, seemed suspended by magic. On a platform in the centre

were the tombs of Alfonso the Fifth and his grandson. Mr. Beckford was hurried along, and not allowed time to ruminate. A throng of monks crowded round. The prior embraced the heretic visitor. The army of mules, horses, and carriages was drawn up in waiting. Parting salutations were exchanged, the fatal voice sounding still in his ears, and the visitors took their leave for Aljubarota. Mr. Beckford mounted his horse, and went by a shorter cut than the high road, the Chevalier Franchi, his master of the household, who knew the way, directing his course.

At Alcobaça the party was received with a delight which Mr. Beckford attributed to the desire of the Lord Almoner for the omelette of M. Simon, the Englishman's cook—the Grande Simon, as he was designated. He beseeched the party to remain another day, that the admirable Simon might make him a Macedoine worthy of Alexander the Great. There was clearly none of the austerity and simplicity, the spare fare and terrific outpourings of the Batalha prophet, and the brothers, to be heard or seen at Alcobaça. Eat and drink, for to-morrow we die, seemed the rule at the latter establishment. Ortolans, quails, and truffle cream, with a forestalled grace at meals, lest the dishes

should spoil, were the order of the day among these opulent devotees to their sensual enjoyments.

Among a variety of amusements with which this holy brotherhood solaced themselves, and which Mr. Beckford has detailed, was a sort of tragedy, got up by an original genius of the place, called the "Excruciating Tragedy of Donna Inez de Castro, and the Cruel Murder of that lovely Lady and her two Royal Infants, represented on the stage, the part of Donna Inez by Senhor Agostinho José."

"The two royal infants," said Mr. Beckford, "what does that mean? We know but too well how the Lady Inez was disposed of; but her two sweet babes escaped, did they not, my Lord Abbot?"

"Truly they did," replied his reverence; "but this fine piece is not the production of one of our own Portuguese bards, it is the work of an Italian gentleman who has acquired our language, and done us the honour of partaking of our hospitality for years. Not being a Portuguese, he cannot be expected to feel so acutely for those precious infants as we Portuguese do. He therefore asked my leave to have them murdered, in order to add to the effect of the catastrophe. Rather than thwart a person of such

transcendant abilities, and my particular friend, I consented. He had half a mind to make them fall by their mother's own poniard in a fit of frenzy, but I could not allow of that, it was going a little too far,—don't you think so?"

The scene that followed inevitably leads to a consideration of the pretexts used for the support of monastic establishments, and the discrepancy between profession and practice. What religion, in the real sense of the term, was exhibited in the larger part of such communities, where they commanded opulence through the gifts of the crudulous, it would be difficult to tell. The French invasion of Portugal must have uprooted many of these establishments, and totally ruined numbers. The cry of "Woe! woe!" was heard indeed throughout the land of Portugal, when it was ravaged by the contending armies of Wellington and Massena.

Of the play thus enacted Mr. Beckford translated part of one of Donna Inez' speeches, where she describes her terrible vision, as a specimen of the Italian-Portuguese playwright. Inez declaims—

"On thy wan disk, O pale and ghastly moon,
I saw portrayed a vengeful countenance;
And whilst upon it I did wildly gaze,
Methought it wore the semblance of the king—

(Now gelid horror claimed me for her own.)
I tried in vain to fly—I fled, but all in vain.
The dreaded face pursued me—
If I turned back 'twas there; if I advanced,
The stern, cold image seemed to freeze my soul;
Changing the genial current of my blood
Into a substance more severe than stone.
Avaunt, my hapless babes! approach me not,
Lest by some fatal petrifying power
Your limbs be fixed in durance!"

"What do you think of that?" said the bard. "E boa! e boa!" replied the Lord Abbot; and of course, "E boa! e boa!" was heard from one end of the apartment to the other. Much of the performance was truly royal, and the plot contrivances as loyal and profound as those of Noodle, Doodle, and Foodle, in Tom Thumb. The king in one place did not know he had any children by Donna Inez, and being told it, asked his prime counsellor:—

"What are they like?"
"Doves, my lord."

The monarch replied in kingly vein:—

"It matters not. I'll tear their felon hearts—
Perish they shall!"

Then murder succeeds murder, until his majesty declared he was satisfied, and the play concluded by the bard speaking an epigram, which ended nearly as follows:—

"Lord of the firmament, couldst thou blaze on,
Urging thy coursers through the plains of light,
And not start back, affrighted at the deed!
Moon, veil thy orb—be quench'd, ye conscious stars,
Never again to sparkle as before!"

The poet was lauded, the ecclesiastics blubbered; a rich embroidered purse, appearing pretty heavy, was given him. "And now," said my Lord Abbot, "let us dry our tears and go to supper." The poet was invited to partake, and the evening closed pleasantly.

By these kinds of visitings and interchanges of company and place, Mr. Beckford let the world at home into the secret of the monastic establishments of the olden time. The storm which burst over them at the French revolution, and its subsequent consequences, must have destroyed many, and stinted the means of sensual enjoyment, which those which remain still intact, once possessed. In the more devoted of the Catholic countries, there will hardly be traced at present that system of self-indulgence with which report had marked them; but it remained for Mr. Beckford almost alone, without prejudice, or taking up the subject in a partial light, to let us into the arcana of the mystery—to exhibit to us how far hypocrisy may travel, and the world be deceived in taking imposture

for reality in religion. Here Mr. Beckford rendered a service to society of which he does not seem to have been wholly unconscious, when he says he wrote "in the bloom and heyday of youthful spirits, and youthful confidence, at a period when the old order of things existed, with all its picturesque pomps and absurdities; when Venice enjoyed her piombi, and submarine dungeons; France her Bastile; the peninsula her holy Inquisition. To look back upon what is beginning to appear almost a fabulous era in the eyes of the modern children of light, is not unamusing nor uninstructive; for, still better to appreciate the present, we should be led not unfrequently to recall the intellectual muzziness of the past."

Not contented with his formal visit to Batalha, he rode there alone, leaving his cook, the inimitable M. Simon, to gratify the gourmand prelates of Alcobaça. He dismounted on striking spots where the scenery was more than commonly attractive, and in one romantic place suffered his horse to feed, and threw himself on the ground, poring intensely over a stream that ran by, absorbed in a train of interesting, yet melancholy recollections, which all that had occurred to him since he had first entered the fair realm of Portugal was, to use his own words, "so well cal-

culated to excite. I thought (alas! how vainly now!) of offers I had slighted with so much levity; of opportunities which, had they been grasped with a decided hand, might have led to happy results, and stemmed a torrent of evils. Since that period, the germ of destructiveness, which might then have been trodden down, has risen into a tree fraught with poisons, darkening the wholesome light, and receiving nourishment through all its innumerably varied fibres from the lowest depths of hell."

While thus giving way to a tide of ceaseless regrets, the conventual bells came booming over the levels, and he entered Batalha, whose prior enquired by what lucky chance he had been so honoured. Mr. Beckford replied, that he had not sufficiently examined the tomb of Don Emanuel. The good prior took the horse, and apologised for the humble fare he had to offer, nor was there any want of cordiality in his reception. He sat down to a frugal collation, and felt what a contrast to its own advantage the humble Batalha offered to the luxurious Alcobaça. The prior conducted him to the tomb of Don Emanuel, which was unfinished. The ornaments, and indeed the whole were in bad taste; but he was silent, because to lead a quiet life established prejudices must not be

thwarted, and to have censured the tomb would have been stark heresy. He then took his leave of Batalha, and mounting his horse, was soon far away from the brotherhood.

It is a proof of his highly imaginative organization, that the changes in the face of nature had such an effect on his fancy. This may be seen in his continual allusions to them. There is a passage in proof of the effect of nature upon his mind which occurred in the description of his departure from this renowned spot. "Night was already drawing on—the moon had not yet risen; a dying glow, reflected from the horizon above the hills, behind which the sun had just retired, was thrown over the whole landscape. 'Era gia l'hora.' It was that soothing, solemn hour, when, by some occult, inexplicable sympathy, the interior spirit, folded up within itself, inclines to repel every grovelling doubt of its divine essence, and feels, even without seeking to feel it, the consciousness of immortality."

The Lord Abbot of Alcobaça declared once more in favour of the wonderful abilities of M. Simon, declaring he had made them the happiest of the happy. On leaving, great were the lamentations at the departure of Simon and his omelet and sauce-making. Even M. Simon melted under the eulogies he received. He

attended a mass before he went, though little given to piety.

"Simon, my Lord Abbot seems to have reconverted you," said his master, as they came out of the church; "you are become very religious."

"Ah, monsieur," replied Simon, "on le sera, à moins; Monseigneur rend la religion si amiable!"

The equipages and horses were all ready to set out, but the Prior of Aviz had something to say to the Lord Almoner, entered a private room and shut the door. A war of words ensued, about what it was not easy to comprehend; but it was hinted by one of the Prior of St. Vincent's confidants, that the dispute regarded certain mysteries, despotic imprisonments, and secret communications between the sacred establishment, and another not less monastic, tenanted by daughters of prayer and penitence. There was a marked change in the deportment of the Lord Almoner when they took leave—a sullen, sulky gloom lay over his countenance. On his way back, Mr. Beckford visited a lady patroness of the feathered tribe, at a residence stocked with birds of all kinds. He was formally introduced, and as formally dismissed. The most important enquiry she made

was as to whether we had any birds in England. She had thought it too cold to allow them to make their nests there. Mr. Beckford informed her we had one in particular, seldom seen but often heard, called the cuckoo, which, from the smiles of some of the party, led the lady to suppose it was a quiz. She came out with a train of hags and damsels to see Mr. Beckford's Arabian, and condescended to be pleased with it.

The peasantry of that part of Portugal seemed comfortably clad in substantial garments, and well supplied with food. This state of things he ascribed to the monks of the royal monastery of Alcobaça, who were content to live and let live—themselves, it may be admitted, somewhat indulgently. The rural scenes encountered in this excursion to the two monasteries, thus proved exceedingly attractive to the stranger. They proceeded to a rich farm mansion called Pedraneira, where everything excellent was found, and in a large and cool apartment, a fine banquet of fish, caught off the coast near Peniche, was served up to them, it being a fast day. But Dr. Errhart, Mr. Beckford's physician, scandalized the monks and their attendants by partaking of an excellent ragout. After which they proceeded to Caldas, on the way observing a Moorish castle on an eminence called Alfagiraõ. The air was scented

with the perfume of lupins. Caldas was a place with springs and ugly habitations, the verandahs painted with yellow ochre, and in some places striped blue and red. A number of invalids were observed here, and among the medical sages of the place Dr. Errhart's name drew calls from them and dialogues in Alsatian French, sound Latin, and broken Portuguese. Caldas was left for Obidos, a place of towers and battlemented walls, a forest of pines near, and the hills clothed with dwarf ilex and myrtle. In midday in June the heat was moderate, the sky a pale tender blue, inexpressibly soft and beautiful, breathing the air of which was a luxury. If the blessings of a free government had been added to the sensation thus produced, "more philosophy than I am master of," observed Mr. Beckford, "would be required, not to murmur at the shortness of our existence." The country people, as the travellers passed along, men, women, and children returning from labour, were singing hymns to St. Anthony. The party alighted at Cadafaiz, where the Prior of St. Vincent awaited them, having travelled in a light carriage, and preceded the rest of the party by a couple of hours.

They next visited a Franciscan convent on St. Anthony's Day, after being stopped by a

lubber of a countryman with the cry of "A miracle! a miracle! My child," said he, "was at the point of death, and the Saint appeared to me in a dream, and told me to give it the raspings of a cow's horn; I did so, and see, it is lively and well."

The man repeated the story at the top of a hill among a crowd of people, still crying out "A miracle!" and a perfect conviction of the fact seemed to pervade all who heard him. The convent lay stretched out for nearly a mile upon an arid flat. The community consisted of thirty or forty monks, young, handsome men, with somewhat of Grecian features. The banner of the guardian saint was presented and saluted; the multitude, for a large one was assembled out of doors, all silent and kneeling, and many weeping. The Prior of Aviz said it was a sight which gladdened his heart, and then reverted to the doings in France at the same moment, in the way of contrast. Mr. Beckford seems to have been deeply impressed with the scene. He justly observed, "Prayer does not always ascend with the greatest fervency from beneath gilded vaults or gorgeous cupolas; it is in the free untainted desert, under Nature's own sky, that man seems to commune more deeply with his God. Impressed with this sentiment,

the bare rocks, the scattered stones, the withered turf, ranked higher in my estimation than all the splendours of regal magnificence; and the simple congregation assembled together in this wild and desolate place to thank the Almighty for his blessing, appeared far superior in my eyes to those pharasaic gatherings attracted to church by worldly motives and the parade of idle vanity."

He could not avoid communicating his sentiments regarding what he witnessed, particularly as affected some lambs presented at the altar, but in place of being sacrificed, afterwards to be reared with care and tenderness, that he even thought their bleatings might reach the throne of universal benevolence. David declared that the ear of God is open to the supplications of all his creatures, to whom, as well as to us, he imparts light, sleep, and nutriment—"qui dat jumentis escam ipsorum et pullis corvorum invocantibus eum." The Grand Prior replied, "Most entirely do I sympathise with the holy monarch. Man, in the delusion of pride, may arrogate to himself an exclusive supremacy, but I am fully persuaded that the same principle of life which animates the wisest and brightest of mankind, pervades the boundless creation in all its forms and branches; and when that prin-

ciple prompts the cry of distress or the expression of gratitude in the humblest animal, neither pass unheeded by the divine Creator, nor are they poured forth to him in vain. These are my own interior sentiments," said the venerable prelate. "And they are mine also," he replied.

The Grand Prior was almost exhausted by his duties and the sun's heat, and had only just reached home with his companion, when he received a written order to be at the palace of Queluz the next day at three o'clock. There was also a letter from the Marquis of Anjeja, the lord in waiting, to invite Mr. Beckford to dine with him the same day, and at the same hour.

Mr. Beckford traversed the country between Cadafaiz and Queluz on horseback, and found it a dreary expanse, with a few picturesque objects scattered over it. At the appointed hour, he reached the palace, the abode of rueful visages, of walking chairs, animated screens, commodes, and all sorts of living conveniences sustained by hope, to be used by sovereigns in any mode they like best. The wasting effects of that empty diet, weather-beaten equerries, superannuated chamberlains, and wizened pages, shewed dependence likely to end in disappoint-

ment. In an interior apartment, the Marquis of Anjeja and his son, the Conde de Villa Verde, were waiting, and dinner was served up, neither to a lively party, nor itself distinguished by any remarkably good cheer.

The marquis observed that the prince had been recently disturbed by strange apprehensions, and still stranger dreams; that his temper was ruffled, and something pressed heavily on his mind. Soon after, the prince gave Mr. Beckford an audience. It was in June, 1794, that he was told, if he walked into a garden opened to him, and entered a pavilion, he might amuse himself with the paintings and china, until the prince was ready to see him. There he met a gardener who had once been in his service, who informed him that the garden was appropriated almost entirely to the Princess of Brazil and Princess Regent. Unable to conjecture what was intended, and evening drawing in, the fountains playing, presently glanced to and fro the princesses' attendants—all this he was observing —when, on a sudden, Don Pedro, the young Marquis of Marialva,* made his appearance,

* Don Miguel, a little time ago so notorious both in Portugal and England, was the reputed son of Don Pedro. Mr. Beckford told Mr. Redding that Don Pedro was web-footed. He was the son of the old marquis,

and learned that he was not likely to have his audience for some time. Don Pedro then said that the princess had heard of his feats in running, he must exhibit them to her; and he then led the way to where the mistress of the garden was seated, in the oriental fashion, on the grass, surrounded by thirty or forty of her own sex, every one far superior in personal charms to their royal mistress.

"I hope you did not run races with the fat monks of Alcobaça?" said her royal highness. "There, now, down that avenue, if you like, and start when I clap my hands; your friend, Don Pedro, and two of my donzellas shall run with you. Take care you are not beaten."

The ground was level, Don Pedro all ardour, and two Indian-looking girls of fourteen or fifteen years old, like those graceful creatures seen in Hindoo paintings, started swiftly, they having ten paces in advance, but they were soon left behind.

"Muy bien, muy bien," said the princess; "I see that the Englishman can run: let me see if he can dance a bolero; Antonita shall be his

Mr. Beckford's great friend: from that night the predilection of the Empress Queen for Don Pedro is said to have been more strongly marked.

partner, the best dancer that followed me from Spain."

The dance was scarcely begun, when "Hush, hush!" arrested the movements, and the Marquis of Anjeja appeared, and said that the Prince Regent had been waiting for the Englishman some minutes. The princess looked blank; the ladies lent him handkerchiefs convenient at the moment of such heat and exertion, and still almost breathless, having kissed the princess' hand, he reluctantly quitted the seductive circle. The prince received him in a vast room, apparently immersed in thought as he approached.

"Welcome back from Alcobaça," said the prince, with great kindness. "I hope the journey was pleasant?"

Here Mr. Beckford observed that the roads had been mended with great expedition, the lord abbot having looked to that.

The prince then remarked that he took good care of himself, that he was yet corpulent, and in love with French cookery—was it not so? "You gave him an opportunity of enjoying it?"

It was evident the grand prior had narrated what took place in their tour, even to the stage play. He then spoke of the play poet, whom

he thought he should send for some day to amuse himself with—the most impudent blockhead in the country—for he wanted something to cheer his spirits. He said that every dispatch from France brought frightful intelligence. He was lost in amazement and horror. "God alone knew upon what shore we shall all be drifted!" With these words, solemnly pronounced, the prince dismissed Mr. Beckford with many affable expressions of regard, such as his heart never failed to dictate. He spoke his own beautiful language with great purity and harmony. He was prompt in his diction, and when he chose to relax, had a national, quaint turn of humour. No one was better able to win the popular affection; and had it not been for the bad influence of his consort, her love of despotism, intrigues, favouritism, and atrocious acts of cruelty, his reign would have been remembered with gratitude.

Mr. Beckford left the palace with the Marquis of Anjeja; passing through one of the saloons, a number of unhappy aspirants to court benefits were observed still loitering under hope deferred. An old general, decorated with scars and orders, asked: "Is there no chance of my delivering my memorial into his royal highness' own hand?"

"None," said the marquis. "The prince has retired for the night."

More ante-chambers were passed through, and more petitioners seen. Mr. Beckford longed to escape to his quinta on the banks of the Tagus, the name of which, San José de Ribmar, was music at the moment. But the marquis made him enter an apartment, and, sitting down, remarked that the regent was more gloomy than he used to be; that a weight of sorrow pressed him down; that he felt his mother's sufferings with much poignancy. That evening he had knelt by the queen's couch for two hours, while she cried out for mercy, imagining her chamber in flames, and her father's image a mass of cinders, a mere statue in colour black and horrible, upon a pedestal of molten iron, a crowd of ghastly phantoms dragging him down. "The vision haunts her by day and night, and I fear it may catch the brains of my royal master. There is a remedy: restitution might be made, infernal acts revoked, and judgment done; but demons in the shape of Pombal's old counsellors, and others, have impeded measures which would conciliate the disaffected, and attach us to the House of Braganza stronger than ever. Has the prince ever touched upon this subject to you?"

Mr. Beckford replied, if he had, the recollection had passed away, from the slightness of the allusion.

The marquis then seemed lost in thought, and said, "If the prince should pour forth his sorrows to you at another audience—for I know he feels affectionately towards you—remember the kind regard you entertain for our family (meaning the Noronhas in general, from whom all the Marialvas are paternally descended), I wish you also to dwell on what the late archbishop,* your attached friend, may have said to you upon the subject. Do not let what you say lose any charm in the narration."

This, Mr. Beckford must have thought somewhat vain. The archbishop's opinions had not been favourable to the marquis' views, as thus expressed. At that moment the most frightful shrieks were heard from the queen's apartment, which was only two rooms away. "Ai, Jesous! ai, Jesous!" was her exclamation in her agony. Mr. Beckford turned pale, which Anjeja observing, said, "I see how deeply you are affected; what must a son feel, and such a son as our royal master?"

* Who had died between Mr. Beckford's first and second visits to Portugal.

The marquis, though entreated, would not remain in his own apartment, but insisted on conducting the visitor to the outward door of the palace.

CHAPTER III.

SPAIN — ARANJUEZ — MADRID — DUKE OF ALCUDIA — FONTHILL IMPROVEMENTS—MRS. BECKFORD'S DEATH — THIRD VISIT TO PORTUGAL — PROGRESS OF THE ABBEY—LORD NELSON'S VISIT—GRAND ENTERTAINMENT.

DURING his second visit, Mr. Beckford found considerable changes among his friends in Portugal. Death had removed several to whom he was strongly attached. His second visit was somewhat more prolonged than his first. He also visited Spain, and published an account of a trip he made to the gardens and palace of Aranjuez, in 1795. On his return, he spoke of the changes he observed in the growth of the trees and plantations there, after his visit in 1789. He found the elms of Charles V., in the island garden, in a state of rapid decay, and visited nine wretched stumps left, close to a brick-kiln. The fountains, too, were going to ruin, and some of the statues had lost limbs. There was still a charm about the spot; the air was mild, the sunbeams played on the Tagus,

and the birds were flitting about. He explored the Calle de la Reyna on horseback, and found many of the elms with their heads dead since he saw them before, but on all sides there were new and thriving plantations of oak, elm, and plane. Acres of unmeaning shrubbery were encroaching upon the wild thickets on the banks of the river. A rage for false improvement was going forward, levelling ground, smoothing banks, and building rockwork, with pagodas and Chinese-railing. Even the natural course of the Tagus had been thwarted. They had trimmed the laburnums he had before admired into what the gardener called genteel shapes. Mr. Beckford wished to see Aranjuez left alone, because nature had dealt bountifully with the valley, and the wild hills round were truly picturesque, while the Tagus wound along in the boldest manner, overhung by willows and tall arbutus, now losing itself in thickets well nigh impervious, undermining steep banks, laying bare rocks, and forming caves and recesses; now flowing smoothly through extensive tracts of low shrubs, aspens, and tamarisks; in one spot edged by the most delicate greensward; in another, with beds of mint and fragrant herbs. Numerous herds of deer were bounding along in full enjoyment of pasture and liberty. He would not have minded,

had they but left Nature alone, for she had lavished her gifts bountifully on that far-famed spot.

This intense love of nature, before noted as so remarkable in Mr. Beckford's earlier years, was probably imbibed at Fonthill, where there were some places remarkable for their sequestered wild beauty, formed and planted by his father, whose character as a man of taste seems to have been lost sight of, and naturally enough, in consequence of his City connection. He was an excellent judge of music and of painting, and had shown himself to possess a cultivated mind. This was, no doubt, the cause of his son's attachment to both pursuits.

There was one piece of ground at Fonthill consisting of many acres, a part of which had been a stone quarry, and from which the material had been supplied of which the old Fonthill house was built. When that noble edifice was completed, the elder Beckford had the whole thickly planted with firs of different kinds, and other forest wood, to conceal the chasm made from being seen from the windows of the house. Broken stone and sand were mixed with the earth, and fresh supplies were added, where needful, to deepen the soil. Some years had passed since young Beckford, under his tutor, Dr. Lettice, had become resident at

Fonthill, and this plantation had since grown to large-sized trees, and become a flourishing wood, lying along the farther side of the water, on a varied surface. It wanted nothing but walks, and a few appropriate buildings of a rustic character, to form a very striking bit of scenery. Soon after Mr. Beckford's return from seeing Aranjuez, his old tutor was at Fonthill, instructing the Misses Beckford, and he suggested that walks should be made of nearly a mile in extent, in order to render that wild spot pleasanter for the ladies, who seemed to have a partiality for it. Mr. Beckford, struck with the capabilities of the place, ordered the necessary workmen to be busy; and the end was achieved, in what afterwards had the name of the "Alpine Garden." From some points of that Garden there were fine glimpses of the Abbey. A grotto was made by a workman named Lane, in imitation of one constructed many years before for Mrs. Beckford's uncle, the Hon. Charles Hamilton, of Pains' Hill, Surrey. Mr. Beckford had, therefore, some experience in planting.

That Aranjuez, when it had changed its character from that wild nature which he had admired so much on his former visit, should have been remembered on his return, was na-

tural, and thus have led him to keep to the line of true taste in what he accomplished, or got others to accomplish for him at home. "Would they had but left Aranjuez alone!" was his continued exclamation.

At that period, the additions to the palace erected by Charles III. had not been long completed, and they agreed well with the rest of the building, being a comfortable if not a magnificent abode. The style within was flimsy, half-French, half-Italian; and the pictures on the walls as strangely jumbled together as if in an auctioneer's shop. There was a well-coloured Crucifixion by Mengs, and the interior of a Gothic Church by Peter Keef, fine, clear, and silvery, the figures exquisite. There were also twelve cabinet pictures, touched by Teniers, the subjects from the "Jerusalem Delivered" of Tasso, as boozily treated as if he had been copying his pot companions. Armida's Palace was a little round summer-house, and the lady a burgher's frou in her holiday dress, holding a Nuremberg-shaped looking-glass up to the broad, vulgar face of a boorish Rinaldo. Fat naïads, smirkish and naked, a pile of furbelowed garments and farthingales displayed near the water's edge; a table with a white table-cloth, silver tankards, cold pie, custards and jellies, all finished with scrupulous

care. These were supposed to exhibit the truly Dutch notion of the beautiful poetry and imagery of the great Italian. What coarse, perverted imaginations must the Dutch artists have possessed! Oratories opening into the royal apartments, costly, not ill-designed, containing marbles worthy of examination, and fresco paintings in the usual allegorical style, abounded.

The conductor of Mr. Beckford to this lion-seeing was an old snuffling domestic of the late king, from whom it was learned that his majesty had been fervent in his devotions, and spent a considerable time in mental prayer; but that the queen was scandalously remiss, and seldom appeared in the chapels, except when etiquette rendered her presence necessary. This remark had no doubt an increased weight, not only with the old stagers in the court of Spain, but with those in the other European courts, in consequence of the French revolution, and monarchs doubled their hypocrisy accordingly. The column of divine right was terribly shaken by that event; and the despotisms of Austria and Spain were no less terrified at the idea of the doctrine of passive obedience being overturned, than the limited monarchy of England; the truth being that there was as little difference in the ruling instrument in the one state as the other.

The actors being unable to follow the free-will in the one case for fear of the consequences, was the restraining difference; the bit wsa champed pretty much alike with all at that moment. While practising the most outrageous acts of injustice, and contemplating others, the sovereigns of Europe were talking of religious duties and violating them, in fact they were trembling; and that of Spain had recourse to the only "true faith" for consolation, with redoubled zeal for petticoated Virgins and sainted idols.

Mr. Beckford noticed the good distribution of the light in tbe chapel at Aranjuez, built after the designs of Sabbatina. The altar pieces were good; and here again appeared the representation of that saint so constant under fair and foul temptations, the most holy St. Anthony, painted by Maella. A remarkable room at Aranjuez, called vulgarly called *el Coliseo*, had a fine ceiling, painted by Mengs. It was here that Ferdinand, the most musical of sovereigns, used to waste his royal hours in listening to the squeaking eunuch Farinelli, and to Egiziello. The room, and it is not to be lamented, from its connection with that incident, was degraded by the spoil of its beautiful roof, it being divided into shabby apartments to accommodate the Infant of Parma. To the opera devotee it is of no moment that

the pyramids perish, or the Coliseum, with its surrounding memorials, be sunk to the earth's centre, could that room remain hallowed by remembrances of Farinelli, and be preserved to the glory of the squalling emasculates; but all the world were fortunately not opera devotees.

There was a large house, too, just erected, for the favorite Alcudia, said to be more magnificently furnished than the royal residences. It had nineteen windows in the front, and a Tuscan portal; and adjoining it was the house of the Duchess of Ossuna, filled with workmen, under the superintendence of a conceited, goggle-eyed Milanese, daubing the walls with might and main, and with paintings no better than those on Birmingham snuff-boxes. The Duchess of Ossuna had been fortunate in having Boccharini to direct her musical band when Mr. Beckford was in Madrid seven years before; at which time she sent Galli, the singer, a present of expensive trinkets heaped upon a magnificent salver of massive silver, two or three feet in diameter.

Apathy still appeared in Mr. Beckford's eyes to pervade the whole of the Spanish and Portuguese peninsula; and so it seemed likely to continue, with such great capabilities of being otherwise. Since then, wars and revolutions

have done little more than convulse countries for which nature and the disposition of the mass of the people had led to the hope of better things. They have not moved to wholesome action. Spain has lost the new world, and the country once a proud Colossus in Europe, striding the ocean, is, as far as regards influence in the civilized world, become a thing to point a moral and adorn a tale.

The visitor saw a brick mansion at Aranjuez, in the dullest Spanish taste; nothing rural about it. There the "lord of two worlds," Spain and the Indies, realized in some degree Burke's notions of kingship, before he himself became a political changeling; "that kings were fond of low company." His majesty, lord of two worlds, had here a snug kitchen, to which he often resorted. Charles cooked with his own royal hands, and for his own use alone, garlick omelets, and lamb's fry, with many similar messes. He delighted in any pretence for descending into low life, and getting out of sight of his court and people. At Aranjuez capacious buildings were seen starting up in secluded corners of the royal park and gardens, his architectural advisers being inferior even to his political ones. The animals, such as deer and hares in droves, ran about at liberty under gigantic alders. Mr. Beckford

counted one hundred and eighty cows ruminating in one green meadow, most sleek and beautiful creatures. He remarked that if the race of grandees in the peninsula could be as successfully sustained by some judicious mode of crossing the breed, Spain would not have had to lament the scurvy state of her nobility; and he expressed his apprehension that if they were suffered to dwindle much longer, accumulating estates and diseases into one family by eternal intermarriages, he should expect to see them on all fours by the next century. He observed, however, that these diminished men had not bowed the knee to the royal favourite, the Baal the king had set up in the Duke of Alcudia. A train of hungry and eager dependents, picked from the inferior or foreign classes, formed his circle of society. With lofty titles, unbounded wealth, and dazzling magnificence, he was treated with contempt and indifference by the first class grandees. They read the tale of his illustrious descent with sneering incredulity, and few instances of a more persevering contempt of an object, in actual power, fully backed by royal favour, from men equally or more contemptible in mental ability, is to be found in historical records.

At Aranjuez Mr. Beckford feasted royally for

his money, on good game, royal apples, and excellent wines; he could not, he observed, have done more so in the more extensive sense of the word feast, if some supernatural power had procured him the royal cook. His majesty too, as he was assured by those he was far from suspecting of flattery, having real talent for the useful profession in which he delighted.

Mr. Beckford returned to England, to his house in Grosvenor Square, early in 1796, and then proceeded to Fonthill. He was now thirty-six years of age, and had seen as much of the world as any other individual of his day. He had lived in splendour and contracted numerous friendships abroad, since he had come of age—friendships in the higher walks of life. From his twenty-first year, and including a married life of three years, he had only visited England at intervals. Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Portugal, and Spain, had for nearly sixteen years been his sojourn; where he studied the arts and languages of those countries, and mingled with the friends of the arts, and those who were most noted in their respective countries. He now contemplated taking up his residence at home, and making certain alterations at Fonthill, which he soon began to carry out. His establishment was made. Dr. Errhart, a medical gentleman and

friend, was attached to his household as his physician, and lived and died in that situation. The Chevalier Franchi, an eminent musical performer, who superintended his household, and the Abbe Maquin, a topographer, herald, artist, literary character, and above all a simple and honest man, who died in 1822, were on his establishment, which was large, and every individual of which was strongly attached to him. A letter from a friend, of which the following is an extract, written just after his return from Portugal, in the beginning of 1796, says:—

"Some letters passed between Fonthill and ———, and the last brought me a handsome and pressing invitation to meet Mr. Beckford at his house in Grosvenor Square, and to return with him to Fonthill, for a few days. At our first interview Mr. B. expressed to me, with a good deal of sensibility and kind expostulation, the concern which my long absence from Fonthill had occasioned him; that he ever set the highest value upon my society and conversation, and continually wished for my advice and assistance in many of his affairs. He mentioned how much he felt for what had passed between Mr. W——— and myself, whose ill disposition towards me, he begged me to believe, had never made the smallest abatement in his friendship

and esteem; that I had certainly committed an error in having appeared, by withdrawing myself from him, as if I had supposed some diminution of his regard; that as soon as he had understood the pressure of the times in England, sometime before Mr. W———'s death, he had determined to offer me immediate assistance; though through accidental impediment an actual tender had not been communicated until after that event; and he concluded by assuring me that no opportunity should be lost to procure me what I should think most desirable in the walk of my profession. He begged me to accept from him, in the interim, an appointment of three hundred a year, adding in the handsomest terms, an invitation to pass as much of my time with him as I could spare, at Fonthill or in town; and the command of an apartment in both places.

"That which gave me more sincere satisfaction than all the rest, is my conviction, from all I can see and learn, that every thing exceptionable in Mr. Beckford's disposition has passed away; and that maturity of years has given to his unrivalled brilliancy of parts a consistence and strength, which have converted genius into sterling ability, and that of the first order, which I hope will at length be turned to public business. The princely splendour of his establishment, and

the suitable style in which he lives, and that within the limits of his fortune, exceed every thing I have ever seen elsewhere, a single step below royalty. But the true gentlemanly ease and simplicity of his manner and behaviour put all his friends and visitors at their ease, and quite at home around him. Let me assure my old friend, that in the midst of all that the most refined or elegant taste can desire, neither my patron nor myself forgot the slippery ground on which we all stood. Should he be at last revolutionized out of his fortune, I hope he possesses sufficient strength of mind to bear the change. He would always have the satisfaction of reflecting that while it lasted he had made the most noble, benevolent, and charitable uses of it. I cannot conclude without saying, that I am happy to find the world beginning, though somewhat slowly, to regard his character and conduct in the light in which I firmly believe they deserve to be seen."

His former tutor writes from Grosvenor Square, in October, 1796:—

"I am going to pass the winter with Mr. B. at Fonthill. He consults me in all his affairs, and cannot dispense with my absence from him at present, while many great objects are depending, which interest his happiness and conse-

quence in the world. He has shown himself so truly and nobly my friend, that I cannot resist his solicitations for my being some time with him; and indeed my manner of living there, with the command of every elegance in life, in the pleasantest society, and with the devotion of every creature that belongs to him, will not make my compliance seem wonderful to you. I have been these three or four days at his house in Grosvenor Square; for in two letters I have lately received from him, he insists on my considering all his houses, and he has many, as my own. I am setting out to-morrow for Fonthill."

The desire that Mr. Beckford should become a political character, the hope of his friends in early life, and again expressed in the first of the above letters, was futile, and should have appeared so to all who knew his disposition and temperament, his excessive pride, which, wounded by some parliamentary opponent, would have caused an explosion of anger not to be appeased; his high mode of thinking in regard to all subjects, and hatred of that pettyfogging and plausible deception in language, and that wariness which adorn the character of the politician in the sight of the penetrating; none of these virtues composed any part of his character; besides, he was too stiff-necked, and could not have bowed

and followed a leader, nor led himself. He preferred literature and art. He had nothing to do with politics, unless it was when his Portuguese friends wanted to make him a politician for their own purposes, but he had evaded them. He would not have been so happy as he was; and he wanted the stimulus of ambition. He had an ample fortune, he said, let others take castles who would, and get one that way.

Mr. Beckford had repeatedly requested before he went to Portugal the secnod time, and had given notice to the country round Fonthill, that he would permit no trespass after game upon his plantation. The law against trespassers, including the inevitable expenses, like many other artful laws in England made by those who are likely to feel their inconvenience slightly, counteracts every honest purpose. In the present case his announcements were disregarded, and the law of trespass treated with contempt. One morning, in a solitary ride among his plantations, he had encountered a whole bevy of men and dogs ranging at full liberty over his lands. He at once returned to his house, sent a notice for a contractor who was to build a wall around all the planted and arable part of his land, extending about seven miles, within twelve months. It was to be twelve feet high, with

a sort of chevaux-de-frise on the top; the materials were in plenty upon the spot. This being settled, he ordered his baggage to be got ready, and started for Portugal, to visit his old courtier friends. On his return at the period just mentioned, the contractor pleaded his ruin if he had not a month or six weeks longer time granted him. This was conceded, and the wall completed.

"Some say I built the wall before I built the house, to cut myself off from mankind. Why, I had always from one to two hundred workmen with me, and I superintended all myself. I built the wall because I would not be intruded upon by sportsmen. In vain were they warned off. Your country gentlemen will transport a pauper for taking a few twigs from a hedge, while they will break it down without ceremony themselves. They will take no denial when they go hunting in their red jackets to excruciate to death a poor hare. I found remonstrances vain, and so I built the wall to exclude them. I never suffer an animal to be killed but through necessity. In early life I gave up shooting, because I consider we have no right to murder animals for sport. I am fond of animals. The birds in the plantations of Font-hill seemed to know me—they continued their

songs as I rode close to them; the very hares grew bold. It was exactly what I wished." *

Thus, then, Mr. Beckford had returned from his second visit to his Portuguese friends early in 1796, and the wall was completed. He soon afterwards laid the foundation of the new building, named the Abbey, and a considerable number of labourers in the necessary trades were continually employed in carrying out the contemplated works. Gates and lodges were erected in the external wall at the entrance of the different roads, and as Mr. Beckford himself personally directed the workmen, strangers were excluded. During this time he resided in the original house erected by his father. Rumour had reported that some extraordinary works were going forward, and the whole population in the vicinity was curious about the new building. The situation of old Fonthill House was not good, it is true, but still it was the finest edifice in the west of England. It was erected at a great expense, consisting of a centre and wings, the former of four stories and the wings of two, connected by fine stone corridors. The house had a noble portico, which rested upon a rustic basement, with two sweeping

* New Monthly Magazine, to Mr. Redding.

flights of steps. The apartments were very numerous. The whole was furnished at very great cost, and in the most splendid and tasteful manner. The walls were adorned with the costliest works of art, and the greatest luxury prevailed in every appliance for use or ornament. Sideboards and cabinets, the work of the best artists, and combinations of the more precious metals with jewellery, and the most expensive and dazzling objects, met the view on all sides. The mirrors, at that time, the middle of the last century, imported from Venice, reflected these splendid valuables in a brilliant manner, and there was added to the other attractions of the place a large, choice, and costly library. There was one apartment filled up wholly in the Turkish style with large mirrors, ottomans, and divans; others were enriched with fine painted ceilings; in short, with all art or taste could devise of comfort and luxury. It seemed as if the Queen of Destructiveness had been at work to induce the demolition of a noble edifice. But Mr. Beckford was not blessed with a robust frame. He was sensible of atmospheric changes, dreaded an east wind, and though he took exercise in any other weather almost to excess, he was peculiarly susceptible of damp, cold weather. The house, fine as it was, had been injudiciously

erected on the margin of a standing piece of water at the bottom of a hill clothed in wood. This was not at all suitable to the constitution of one whose greatest enjoyments were in the open air, and who had drank so deeply of the atmosphere of the sweet south in Portugal, where existence in the open air for more than three-fourths of the year was such a luxury to a lover of nature. Dissatisfied with the site of the house, or fanciful of its ill effects, noble and costly as it had been, its owner doomed it to be sacrificed. This resolution was not formed until 1801, after the new and far-famed abbey was far advanced towards completion. The wings were the only parts condemned at first, and it was thought of leaving the centre, a noble house, still standing.

The grounds surrounding the old house had a surface agreeably diversified and adorned with clumps of fine old timber. The standing water or lake before spoken of was in the lowest vale. The east bank was ornamented with rocks, caverns, baths, and grottoes in the taste of the earlier part of the century. All this was now to be changed, and sheep run wild where the house had stood, nibbling the herbage that replaced the floor of the noble hall. The elder Beckford, had he been gifted with second sight,

might have seen in less time than another age—

> "The golden ear
> Enclose the slope, and nod on the parterre,
> Deep harvests bury all his pride had plann'd,
> And laughing Ceres reassume the land."

The hand of man often effects that destruction by his impatience, which anticipates the ruin wrought by time. Thus the parterre once exhaling the perfume of a thousand flowers, and presenting a picture of the choicest floral growth, their colours dipped in heaven, soon became a waste, overrun by the briar and wild flower; even of the noble building which superseded it, how shortlived was the vitality!

Mr. Beckford determined upon proceeding rapidly with his new mansion; he placed his former tutor, Dr. Lettice, in a comfortable house at Fonthill, only occupied in part by an old housekeeper of the mansion. There the doctor could be with his own family, and when the ladies were in the country, superintend their education. With a view to this latter duty, it was wished he should take a doctor's degree at Cambridge, which he had done accordingly in 1797. The Miss Beckfords were now becoming of an age fit to receive those higher branches of instruction which were beyond the

sphere of the Swiss governesses, who before superintended, and were resident with them at their grandmother's, at West End, the doctor then residing at Hampstead. When the ladies were there during the lifetime of their grandmother, they had thus the benefit of masters from town.

It has been before stated that Mr. Beckford was in Paris during the destruction of the Bastile, and there day by day calmly watched the progress of the insurrection and revolution. He rode on horseback at all times, and no one was better acquainted with the causes and results of that catastrophe. He returned to England after that event, and in 1790 sat to Sir Joshua Reynolds for his portrait. In 1791 he again visited France, and remained two years, leaving Paris only on the death of the king. On this occasion, upon his passport being delivered to him by the reigning party, there was subscribed upon it "Paris la voit s'en alle avec regret." During this sojourn, as before in 1789, he was exceedingly curious to watch all the public proceedings, and he made various notes and sketched in MS. the characters of the leaders of the different parties with his peculiar ability in "Letters upon the actual state and leading characters of several of the Courts of Europe, particularly France, from the beginning of the

Revolution to the death of the King," &c. His visits to France caused him to keep an agent there; and at this time (1797) that agent being permitted to communicate with him, sent over a message indirectly, relative to the wish of the French republic to treat for peace with England. This Mr. Beckford communicated to the government, but George III. and his minister would listen to no overtures. It was the restoration of kingship alone in France that would induce them to come to terms—republics were not to be tolerated.

This incident made some noise, but Mr. Beckford, as before said, was not at all formed for an actor in the drama of politics. His abilities were unquestionable, his knowledge of the world tenfold greater than that of his quondam boy-fellow Pitt, but his mind was too expanded for the niggling details, compromising, and double-dealing of a political life. He could not reduce reason to a computing principle, and subject high feeling to political huxtering and craft, for low-minded men in this respect are the best politicians. The art of government is easy, if equivocal means of managing it be rendered available; and accordingly, most leading political characters are great only because their coadjutors and supporters are little. Politics are

the forte generally of dull people, hence their universality. Men of enlarged views and expanded minds, particularly men of genius, cannot descend to pursuits in which openness, a generous spirit, and ideas that grasp a longer space of time than twenty-four hours are foreign. Then the affronts and insults that must be sustained to support cold friends, or temper the animosity of foes, would never have suited Mr. Beckford's fiery and haughty temper. He used to say he inherited violence of temper from his great grandfather, Peter Beckford, the Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica, who fortified Port Royal, and collected means of resistance to the French and Spaniards, being the president and commander-in-chief of the forces in the island, as well as a public-spirited man. But the violence of temper of this governor was so great, that he would knock down a member of the chamber of representatives who presumed to differ from him while he was governor. He ruled with almost absolute sway, thinking himself the greatest man in the world, carrying and using, too, a large stick on very trivial provocations. In 1710 the whole house of representatives voted contrary to his wishes, which threw him into so uncontrollable a passion, that it brought on a fit of apoplexy, which terminated

his existence on the spot. There was no want of ability for the management of state affairs on Mr. Beckford's part, and if his preference had been given to politics in place of other studies, he would have carried out the designs of his friends. But with his fortune and love of study, literature, and the arts, it could hardly be expected he should make such a sacrifice. Lastly, he himself stated he had not patience and strength of constitution to sit in Parliament if he had had an inclination to be a politician, and he soon gave up his seat.

At this time he had his enemies. A writer (1797) speaking of him, said, "Mr. Beckford's avowed enemies he could not characterize, from their not being less resolutely deaf than affectedly blind. Detraction and malice keep to their true characters; they are so clear-sighted as to see evil, well known not to have a shadow of existence, while ignorance and stupidity, their handmaids, linked with ingratitude, find it much more convenient to libel a benefactor than to repay obligations, and stand ever ready to proclaim aloud what malice and detraction are so ready to invent. It were humbling to bestow further notice on that which deserves nothing but contempt."

Mr. Beckford was not a mere idealist, though

he possessed reflection with a high degree of sensibility, and perhaps in the fancies in which he indulged, he gave way more to imagination than to judgment. He was hardly of those who compare their own ideas with those of others, because he kept to his own peculiar fancies, and saw in them only what imagination, more than reason, first prompted, rather than what the mind contemplated after the exercise of reason. He was one of those who lived in the universe he had himself created and embellished, and often imagined, in the fairy pictures his fancy presented to him, that he saw the model of that of which he should be able to work out the realization, however subtle the figure in which it might present itself. In his writings his exuberance of imagination continually breaks out when he is describing natural objects and the feelings they impart to himself.

Mrs. Beckford died July 22, 1798, at West End, aged seventy-four. A grand procession followed on the 30th of July. The body was taken to Salisbury, and there it lay in state, and the next day proceeded from that city followed by a train of mourners, Mr. Beckford's Fonthill household and his numerous tenantry. They were met by between two and three hundred of the poor people around Fonthill and in the

different villages, to many of whom, who were were known personally to Mr. Beckford, he presented suits of mourning. Two troops, comprising the Fonthill association, turned out at the lodge in military mourning. This was a corps raised, clothed, and armed at his own expense. The procession proceeded in this way to the church with solemn music. A cold collation was given in the hall of Fonthill House and other rooms to several hundreds of persons. Outside, ale and refreshments were distributed to the poor, and presents of mourning cloth.

The Misses Beckford were at Fonthill during the imposing ceremony, the different objects in which their father ordered to be carefully impressed upon their minds, lest they should imbibe wrong impressions of what they saw.

As he had flown away from his residence in Switzerland after the death of his wife, and changed the scene to new places, and even as far as Portugal and Spain, so, on the loss of his mother, he suddenly quitted his works at the Abbey soon after her funeral, and paid a third visit to Portugal, where he remained some months. He was at Fonthill again, however, in July, the following year, having returned by way of Falmouth. The intelligence of his expected arrival, and that of his physician and suite, was

received with heartfelt delight by his tenantry and the workpeople at the Abbey. The Font-hill Association got intelligence of the time of his expected arrival, turned out to receive him, and accompanied him to the lawn in front of the house. The villagers also came to bid him welcome, exhibiting a strong attachment to him or to the cheer which was certain to greet them on all occasions at his hands.

Wyatt, whose conduct in regard to the Abbey was so exceptionable, met him the day after his arrival, to report on the state of the works. With the inspection of what had, and was to be done, he was now much occupied. Little did he think of the insecure foundation of his great tower, for the safety of which he paid thousands of pounds, while the arches for which he so paid, in order to render all secure, were not turned at all. The tutor of his daughters, also, came down from Hampstead, to answer any questions about his pupils, who were permitted to have no visitors in his absence, so carefully were they superintended, no doubt by the desire of their father.

The Abbey had begun by this time to cut a still more considerable figure, those portions more particularly so which were carried forward first; and they excited much praise among the

individuals admitted to see it, and great surprise outside the demesne at what had become visible from thence. Mr. Beckford remained but a day or two at Fonthill, and then went to town on a visit to his daughters, intending to take them back with him. Dr. Lettice thought it would be wrong to keep them there during the season, as they would thus lose their different masters and teachers in town. Mr. Beckford, however, took them down. At his request they invited the three daughters of the Duke of Hamilton, their cousins to accompany them and remain during the fine season.

About Michaelmas, 1799, the Abbey, nearly three hundred hands being employed upon it, had made a surprising progress. It was expected the roof would be on by Christmas in that year. The ladies and their visitors drove about the grounds, and repeatedly visited the building, the tower of which was now two hundred feet in height. It was even then possible to ascend to the top, the view from which was particularly fine. The autumn season turned out wet, and the ladies left Fonthill sooner in consequence, or about the middle of October. Before they went, Miss Beckford presented their colours to the Fonthill volunteers, she having learned a speech for the occasion. The ladies went to West

End, by way of Basingstoke, dining and remaining a night at Lord Dorchester's on their way.

It was not a great while, however, before Mr. Beckford determined to have his children nearer to him in the summer. There was a pleasant house, called Berwick in the Park, near the mansion at Fonthill, where the young ladies and their governess could reside, and no great distance off was the cottage fitted up for their tutor's use. Thus there could be no intrusion on the ladies' studies, and they could have their drive unobserved by the workmen or visitors at the house.

There never were two more amiable young ladies than the Miss Beckfords. Their sisterly affection was unsurpassed in any family. On one occasion, when the younger sister, the Marchioness of Douglas afterwards, was ill, it was remarked by a friend, who knew them well, and used to call them "angels," that Miss Beckford suffered in health and spirits to a degree hardly to be credited, on the medical attendant not allowing her to see her sister. Miss Beckford was of a nature scarcely earthly, one of the sweetest mentally-constituted creatures that humanity ever boasted. Her father used to speak to the last of the angelic temperament of Lady Margaret, her mother, and always with mois-

tened eyes. She resembled her in this respect. To the proposal for a second marriage, as one urged by Mr. Beckford's mother and friends, and for his too indulgent mother he had great deference, when he received a refusal, as already stated, he determined that, having done all that could be required in consonance with the wishes of others, he would, while he lived, regard his deceased wife in melancholy recollection as his only bride. He first met Lady Margaret at the rooms in Bath, and deep indeed was his affection for her, even when nearly threescore years from her decease might be supposed to have chilled his early attachments.

The works of the Abbey were thus superintended personally by Mr. Beckford for years. The new building was at a considerable distance from the old mansion. Yet its owner, not contemplating the finish of the new work, even in the habitable part, for several years to come, had made some changes in the interior of certain of the rooms in the old mansion as late as 1797. Not only did Mr. Beckford support at this time a princely establishment at Fonthill, not having less than thirty servants in his household, but he had still as constant residents with him his physician, Dr. Errhart, that eminent musician, the Chevalier Franchi, and the

Abbé Maquin, the antiquary, topographer, and herald, and a secretary, with one or two artists. He never passed by the reading of all new works that appeared worth perusing. A lady having made a translation of a part of the "Jerusalem" of Tasso, he was delighted with it, as was his sister-in-law, Mrs. Harvey, the authoress of a novel called "Louisa." He was an early riser, active, and able to get through a good deal of labour as well as amusement during the day. People who were not admitted within the gates of Fonthill, to gratify curiosity, told all sorts of stories about the wonderful and proud recluse that inhabited there. The fact was, that Mr. Beckford was the farther from a recluse of any man of his time, if the term be applied to hermit exclusiveness. There were never less than a hundred workmen and superintendents, often two hundred, and on one occasion five hundred in his employ in the buildings and grounds. In this position, continually busied with the improvements of the demesne, to adapt the grounds to the view from the new buildings, or "Abbey," as it was named, he continued for years busy, except in occasional journeys to his town-house. The housekeeper, a very respectable woman, much regarded by the family, was taken ill. Mr. Beckford expressed an anxiety in her behalf

scarcely credible, for he was greatly attached to his domestics, and could not bear to change them. He placed unbounded confidence in them, and more than once had to repent his habit of so doing, but it made no difference in his conduct. He was the least suspicious of mankind.

One day a friend, expressing to him his surprise that he left so many precious things open about his house, and that he was not robbed; for he deposited diamonds in a china cup, and valuables lay about on tables and in drawers unlocked in the most careless manner—

"My servants are so used to the sight of these things, that their robbing me is out of the question."

"Aye, but if you do not fear your servants, a robbery might easily be committed here from without. There would not be much difficulty in breaking in."

"Oh!" he replied, "I am in no fear of that. All my servants are great guns in their way, and I am a prodigiously large blunderbuss myself."

During this year he continued the superintendence of his noble works with extraordinary order. Sir William and Lady Hamilton having arrived in England, and Mr. Beckford having been acquainted with Sir William in the lifetime

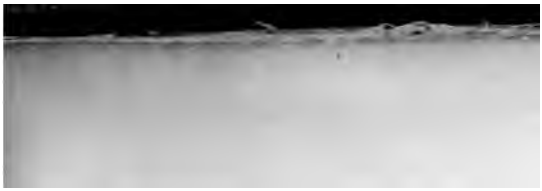
of his first and truly excellent lady, he invited him to Fonthill together with Lord Nelson, and a number of other distinguished persons, to meet them, having determined to entertain them in a manner worthy of his own excellent taste, and in honour of the hero of the Nile. Among other things, it struck him that he might make the abbey, a good portion of which was advancing towards completion, contribute to enhance the entertainment of his guests. He, therefore, laid down his plans with the idea of giving something new in the way of sight-seeing in England. He was well acquainted with the monastic establishments in Italy, Spain, and Portugal; and the idea struck him of rendering an imitation of them subservient to his purpose.

With the foregoing consideration he set no less than five hundred workmen upon the abbey to get it ready for the purpose to which he meant to adapt it. They worked at night by torch light. Only one of the galleries was ready; but that was one hundred and thirty-five feet long; and some of the other apartments that could be finished were sufficiently large for the purpose to which he intended to apply them.

All that could be done was completed by Christmas, 1800. Lord Nelson and Sir William Hamilton came by way of Salisbury, where

the name of the hero of the Nile had collected crowds to greet him, determined to exhibit its honest feeling towards a great leader in that branch of the public service which has been deservedly foremost in the public favour. There was upon this occasion a feeling exhibited, which belonged peculiarly to that era, and the desperate conflict in which England was engaged. It was not a cold curiosity, but a heartfelt enthusiasm, which seemed to admit of no possibility of repression; rude, it is true, but cordial. Justice could not be done to the delight of the people on the roads, who went considerable distances on foot to meet the great naval chief. A mounted corps proceeded to the extremity of the county, ten miles off, under the command of Captain Windham, one of the county members, as an escort of honour, and accompanied the carriage of Nelson back to the expectant crowds that filled the streets of Salisbury, and received it with cheers which rent the heavens.

Nelson's shattered frame ill-reflected the bold spirit of the man. "As he alighted from his carriage," said a narrator of the proceedings, "I could not help asking myself if that one-armed, one-eyed man could really have scattered destruction among the fleets of France. I felt all my conception of what constituted a grammar-



school hero utterly discomfited. I placed the discrepancy, as Shakspeare had done before me, or rather, perhaps, from remembering his fop's solution of the difficulty, to the use of the 'villainous saltpetre.'"

One of the members of the corporation of Salisbury, a citizen fully sensible of the honour done him on the occasion, was the host of Nelson. His lordship was accompanied by several of his friends, among whom was Sir William and Lady Hamilton. Soon after they had alighted, Nelson and Sir William, amid the acclamations of an immense number of persons, proceeded to the council house, where a guard of the North British dragoons was stationed. The mayor and corporation, in their robes, met the hero in state at the entrance, and, in procession due, led their distinguished visitor to the council-chamber, where, in the accustomed form on such occasions, the freedom of the city was presented to the noble admiral in a box of heart of oak, having the vote of the council engraved upon it, in a silver plate. The thanks of his lordship were returned in plain, manly English, and in a few words, expressing his gratitude at the honour. There was great good sense in this, because the honour was one corporate bodies so frequently paid in those days when an opportunity occurred,

that it would have been difficult not to repeat one's-self on similar occasions. A cold collation being shared—for, in those days, as at present, eating is what lawyers term "sealing," in all corporate matters—Nelson took his leave under an escort of cavalry, delighting the people by the hearty way in which he acknowledged the attentions they had paid him.

All the world, on such occasions, watches the hero of the time; and the minutest actions are registered as if they were of great importance. Heroes, great in one point, we unthinkingly imagine, must be different from other men in all. In these instances, we exclude human infirmity, or lose sight of it in the dazzling brilliancy of their exploits. The papers teemed with anecdotes which had no foundation in fact; while some were distorted from the reality, and put on the garb of extravagance. On reaching the Council House, and looking among the crowd, Nelson espied a sailor whom he recognised as having fought under him in the battle of the Nile. The sight of the man seemed to recall an event which had contributed so largely to his own glory, although one of its humblest instruments. For the moment, the object of his own visit to the city was forgotten. He called the man by his name, and declared the

pleasure he felt, and should ever feel, at meeting one of those who had borne a part in that glorious action. He made the man a handsome pecuniary present, and dismissed him. A second case of a similar nature happened in a man who had lost an arm at the Helder, as he himself had done at Teneriffe. Here it was mere sympathy only from their cases being similar. At once all the distinction of rank vanished before the consciousness of his own better fortune; and the object received a generous proof of it, as the former man had done; but then the last had the claim of service at the Nile, and also of being a contributor to the glory of his admiral, to plead in his behalf.

In proof that Nelson's mind was actuated solely by grateful recollections, he gave another example of his sympathetic feeling when he was himself the soliciting party. He was up-stairs at the Council-house, and observed from the window, among the multitude below, the face of a sailor who he remembered had attended him when he lost his arm at Teneriffe, and who assisted in the amputation of the limb. At once he beckoned the man to come up, and, going to meet him in his passage from the stairs, took him by the hand, his own inclosing a present, at the same time testifying the pleasure he felt,

for the services rendered him upon that melancholy occasion, more by the expression of his countenance than by words. He was withdrawing, when the man took from his bosom a piece of lace which he had torn from the sleeve of the amputated arm, and had preserved to that time, expressing his intention of parting from it only with his life, in recollection of the honour he felt in having served under such a distinguished commander. Nelson could not stifle the emotion he experienced, as, with faltering accents, he shook the man by the hand, and bade him farewell.

"I have not been," said the narrator, "an unobservant passenger through life, and had in several instances been pleased to find the result of my impressions of the characters I have observed coincide with the truth subsequently revealed by incidents often wholly unexpected. I saw in Nelson a man of great simplicity of character, quick of discernment as to important occasions, generous of heart, full of feeling, little versed in the wiles of society, and thus liable to dupery, by giving trust too unsuspectingly. His manners made him more popular than many other celebrated men, because he looked first to his condition as a man, to which he made secondary the conventional forms which depreciate

that condition. The multitude, high and low, reverses the principle. Napoleon, the soldier, had that feeling in common with Nelson.

"The bustle of the day was not over when I received a message from Hindon, requesting I would return to that place, if possible, before Nelson quitted the city. I was wanted upon pressing business. I obtained leave of my commanding officer to go off duty, and obeyed the summons, as Lord Nelson and his friends were about leaving by the Wilton Road. I had not the slightest idea of the honour which awaited me.

"On my arrival, a note of invitation to dine at Fonthill House, December 20th, 1800, was given to me.

"I was soon equipped in my uniform again, for I had taken that with me. I was soon, too, in front of the lodge, where the Fonthill volunteers were drawn up *en haye*, to receive the distinguished party. There were the volunteers, equipped at the expense of the owner of the magnificent mansion where Lord Nelson and his friends were to be quartered. The band consisted of thirty performers, selected with great care, as the owner of Fonthill was a distinguished musical amateur. I had not time to reach the house earlier, as I ought to have done. At the entrance, the owner of the de-

mesne was waiting the arrival of Nelson and his friends. I was, therefore, obliged to follow in the rear of the cavalcade; for, as I have said, I had only got to the lodge, and had scarcely arrived there, before the guests were announced as on the approach. The band struck up the National Anthem, 'Rule Britannia,' and preceded the carriages, which passed between the lines of the volunteers, at a slow pace, up to the principal entrance of the house. Here a large party, of both sexes, with the owner of the mansion at their head, received the hero of the Nile and his friends, just at the foot of a grand flight of steps, under a portico which stood before what was called the Marble Hall."

The military formed in line on the lawn in front of the house, fired a *feu de joie*, and the band then played, "God save the King!" Just as this salute and parade were going on, the whole well executed, under the command of Captain Williams, commandant of the day, the weather, very thick and even foggy before, cleared up, and displayed the whole scene to as great advantage as the author of Vathek himself could have desired. He received Nelson and his friend, Sir William Hamilton, as above mentioned, on the marble steps in front of Old Fonthill House Among the arrivals just

then was the celebrated Peter Pindar, more correctly Dr. Wolcot. Soon after, they entered the building, and they retired to prepare for dinner, which was to take place at six o'clock; and the time drew on apace. The repast abounded in the usual fare of a good table; but the donor seemed purposely to have kept down any extraordinary exhibition of sumptuousness, not to lessen the effect of the succeeding entertainments. When coffee had been introduced, a variety of pieces of vocal music were executed by Banti, who had been procured from town on purpose, besides several other most eminent performers both vocal and instrumental. Lady Hamilton, whose syren manners, under so many phases of equivocal character, had been tutored in the midst of the most unblushing and profligate court in Europe in every kind of accomplishment that could aid her husband's diplomacy, here displayed her vocal abilities, which were of no common order, to the delight of more than one distinguished guest. Conversation and music filled up the interval until the hour of twelve, when supper was commenced—a supper of the most elegant kind, with a choice dessert, including every thing light, rare, and costly. In this manner three days passed away, during and af-

ter the dinner hours. The earlier hours of the morning and afternoon were occupied, when the state of the weather permitted, in excursions over the vast extent of the grounds, and seeing the pictures, library, and numerous treasures within the house. These gave ample amusement to the company in the forenoon, numerous as it was, when unable to go out of doors.

The grandest part of the entertainment was reserved for Tuesday, December 23rd. Never before was there such a united display of splendour and good taste exhibited in this country. It was not a tawdry court entertainment, got up by household lords and head cooks, but a splendid banquet, in good keeping with the illusion designed. The scene of action was transferred from the house to what was afterwards styled "the Abbey," not at that time fully completed, of which and its owner so much was subsequently heard.

It was the hour of five when the noise of carriage wheels at the door of the mansion met the ear. The gates of the park had been thrown open, and a large assemblage of persons was collected on the lawn. The company entered the vehicles, and took their place in the order previously arranged. Nelson was loudly cheered on entering the first carriage. It would have been out of keeping to exclude the public

when the scene was to emulate a monastic establishment—all the world was permitted to enter the grounds. Slowly wended the train of carriages towards the Abbey, as the dusk of evening gathered fast into darkness. It occupied three quarters of an hour, by the circuitous route taken, to pass from Fonthill House to the Abbey. The wall enclosing the Abbey woods was scarcely passed when the procession, under a Gothic arch, was supposed first to enter the abbot's domain. The road then lay winding through thick woods of pine and fir, illuminated by numberless lamps suspended in the trees, and flambeaux without number carried by the sides of the vehicles. The procession was escorted by the military, their band playing solemn airs and marches. The effect was greatly increased by the continuous roll of drums placed about on distant eminences, by the blaze of lights displayed here and there, sometimes moving, at others stationary; now gleaming from bright arms and armour, now darkness being permitted to enshroud all, to make the contrasts more striking, for in these Mr. Beckford delighted. The imagination may not easily conceive such a scene. Nothing could exceed the *tout ensemble*.

The appearance, on the arrival of the company at the Abbey, hushed them all into silent ad-

miration, at the increased splendour of the lights, contrasted with the deep shadows falling on the walls, battlements, and turrets of the edifice, as they displayed themselves in groups, or, as the light flickering here and there struck the salient parts of the buttresses and arches of the great tower, until they faded into the gloom above. On the summit, over all, attached to a flag-staff fifty feet long, waved the broad flag of a vice-admiral, in compliment to Nelson, the colours in which could only now and then be distinguished, as waving in the breeze they caught the reflected illumination from beneath, and then as suddenly disappeared—an effect seemingly produced by some mysterious art.

The company was set down in a groined Gothic hall, between two lines of soldiers. They proceeded onwards to the great saloon, which afterwards was called the Cardinal's Parlour. It was hung with very fine tapestry. Before the arched windows dropped long, full curtains of rich purple cloth. Ebony chairs, and tables studded or inlaid with ivory, for the most part of an antique pattern, but varied in form, composed the character of the furniture. The whole was strictly in monastic taste, and lit with wax in sconces of silver.

In this parlour the dinner was laid out on a

table which occupied its whole length of fifty-three feet. A superb repast was served up in a long single line of enormous silver dishes. These dishes were wholly in the massy style and fashion of the ancient abbeys. Their contents were unmingled with any of the refinements of the modern culinary art. The sideboards and tables glittered with piles of plate, and a profusion of light blazed over all. A huge Christmas fire of fir and pine cones united warmth to the comfort of that gorgeous room, as well as increased the novelty and splendour of the *coup d'œil.*

The numerous company displayed its satisfaction and wonder. All were in excellent humour. The grandeur of the entertainment astonished the guests. Some who had visited at similar entertainments of note, confessed their admiration at the originality, superiority, and extent, as well as splendour of the present banquet. Literary men, artists—among them, West, president of the Academy of Painting—connoisseurs, and musicians formed part of the company, composing a union of talent as well as fortune, and representing a combination of mind rarely, indeed, seen in our private entertainments among persons of opulence, or in the noblest saloons.

When the dinner was over, the company

mounted the stairs to some of the apartments above, that had been just completed. The staircase was lighted by certain mysterious-looking figures, dressed in hooded gowns, holding large wax torches. The room which next received the guests was hung with yellow damask, and decorated with cabinets of rare and costly japan work. Among other conspicuous objects were credences, or antique-looking buffets, exhibiting wrought plate, cups, vases, and ewers of solid gold. From this room the company entered the library, fitted up in a similar manner. That room was separated by a large Gothic screen from a gallery, the half of which only was finished and furnished. There, too, all was in the monastic taste, with shrines, reliquaries, and religious sculptures; the whole illuminated with wax, in candlesticks of silver upon candelabra, having a most magnificent appearance.

As the company entered this gallery, music struck the ear as from some invisible hand, either by being concealed behind a large scarlet curtain backing a shrine, or else from a canopy over it, suggesting a service of the old Catholic times. Nelson, who saw all with silent interest, seemed much struck with this deception of the senses. The whole, he observed, was a representation of the religious worship of Sicily,

which he had seen there, and elsewhere in the South.

In the library, after the old custom, a species of confectionary was presented in gold-wired baskets, with wine and spiceries—a measure adopted, perhaps, to gain time as well, while chairs were arranged in the yellow damask room to receive the company. A clear space was left in front of the seats. When the company had returned to that room and taken seats, Lady Hamilton entered, attired in the character of Agrippina, carrying in a golden urn the ashes of Germanicus, in order to excite the Roman people to avenge the death of her husband, who had fallen a victim to the envy of Tiberius, poisoned, as it was supposed, by that emperor's order, while leading an army in the East. The actress showed on this occasion the benefit of the assiduous care Sir William Hamilton had taken to instruct her in the Roman history and manners. She displayed, with great fidelity, the attitudes of a Roman lady: the grief she was supposed to feel, and that nobility of feature directed to express sorrow, which belongs only to good acting; and here she was, as she had been through life, an adept. She threw into her character everything in passion, or solicitation, which could move the Roman people to

uphold her cause, and that of their favourite leader. Classical gracefulness in the movements of her head and hands, and in her mode of holding the urn, and shifting the position of her arms, now in presenting it before the Roman people, then in elevating it to the gods in the act of supplication, attracted great praise. She altered her head-dress to suit the different changes of situation in which she presented herself in succession, with so much ease and adroitness, without retiring or turning aside a moment from the spectators, that she merited the praise of extreme cleverness. In the last scene of her pantomime—for pantomime it was—she took a young lady from the company to personate her daughter. Here, too, her action was so correct and natural, that she drew tears from some of the company. It is questionable whether any scene, without theatrical assistance from other characters, could be represented with greater effect.

The party, at eleven o'clock, left the Abbey, in order to return to supper at the mansion-house. On quitting the vast building, in which the lights were fading fast, the lamps and torches no longer visible, as before, to any considerable extent, and a few scattered stars alone twinkling between the breaks in a sky half-overrun with

clouds, made it seem as if all that had been taking place, before passing the boundary wall, was the awakening from a dream, or the reversal of some magical spell which had enchanted all present. The following day, the same feeling clung to the minds of those present, when they had left a scene to which it would be difficult to find a parallel.

Among the incidents regarding Lord Nelson, related by Mr. Beckford while he was visiting him at Fonthill, was the singular fact of his exhibiting a species of nervous cowardice, little to be expected. "I observed that I had enclosed with a wall of almost seven miles in extent all the plantations and ornamental grounds of Fonthill, leaving only the open and unplanted grounds without side, and that I had a drive of between fifteen or twenty miles within the wall, in consequence of the mode in which the grounds were laid out, and I offered to show him what had been done by planting in the course of years. Nelson mounted by my side in a phaeton, drawn by four well-trained horses, which I drove. There was not the least danger, the horses being perfectly under my command, long driven by myself. Singular to say, we had not gone far before I observed a particular anxiety in his countenance, and pre-

sently he said, 'This is too much for me—you must set me down." I assured him that the horses were continually driven by me, and that they were perfectly under command. All would not do. He would descend, and I walked the vehicle back again. This is incredible of one who in the hottest fire seemed to feel his spirit rise with the imminence of the danger."

It is well known that Nelson's frame was weak and shattered; in him mind triumphed over body, on great occassions of danger in a service familiar. It was evident he had much to combat when there was no call for mental exertion. Accustomed to the sea so long, he was often sick when at anchor, and his mind unemployed. Cheered with victory after he was wounded, and contented to die, he could not bear to feel the shaking of the ship when two or three guns were unexpectedly fired after the battle was over, at one or two of the enemy's ships that had made off. This nervousness might have been the effect of the wound he had received; but it might also have shown his peculiarly nervous excitability of frame.

CHAPTER IV.

ADVERSE LAW-SUIT—THE ABBEY—GENERAL DESCRIPTION—ANECDOTE—HERALDRY—THE ABBEY INHABITED.

THE foregoing *fête* was given at the end of the year 1800, and in June, 1801, the abbey had advanced so far towards completion, that Mr. Beckford determined to take up his residence in that part of the building which he designed for his personal occupation. He ordered much of the furniture of old Fonthill House to be sold, from its being unfit for the Abbey, although of the most finished kind. During the time of the sale he went away on a visit to Cliffton, near Bristol. He also condemned a portion of old Fonthill House to be pulled down.

The sale at the old mansion house took place in August 1801. There never was, perhaps, in the world, out of a palace, nor there as far as taste was concerned, a collection of finer furniture than was thus condemned to the hammer. No expense had been spared in procuring it by the elder Beckford. The books in the library, and the finer paintings, were alone kept back. At that time the curiosity of the country round was so excited by the sale, that the harvest is said to have been retarded. The distinguished elegance of the place, the noble grounds, the foliage, the lake, and the aquatic birds, the gardens embellished with every European, American, and Asiatic tree and shrub that could be procured; the noble family mansion itself, filled with the most refined accommodation of every kind that art and luxury could supply;—drew all the fashion of the west of England to the sale. The auction was held in the great hall, in which the elder Beckford had placed a noble organ, twenty-six feet high and over fifteen wide. There was nothing sold which would not in value and magnificence have suited the finest palace in Europe. The most trifling article brought its guinea. In the apartment fitted up *à la Turque*, the prices paid for articles were excessive. The hangings here were all silk or

satin, of superlative quality; the mirrors, of French and Venetian glass, were the most costly in the kingdom; the sofas in the eastern style, and the chairs and stools were of highly burnished gilding; yet the really valuable articles fetched little, compared to the showy gewgaws. The organ, for example, which cost two thousand pounds, brought only two hundred and ninety; and two exquisite library tables brought not half what was expected. The want of taste in the public of all ranks was, as usual, very conspicuous. The number of purchasers for the finery, which, however good of its kind, was still but finery, was extraordinary, and in the purchases made no one piece taken from the rest could accord with another in a different establishment. The truth was, the false taste and superfluous buyers of the country round were concentrated on the occasion. Everybody would have something, no matter what, that they might be said to have it. There were two celebrated Claudes from the Alfieri Palace, at Rome, considered only among the middling works of the great artist, that were reserved with the other paintings. Thus terminated the history of old Fonthill House. It was singular that two preceding mansions there had been burned down, and the most magnificent of all, that

was built by the elder Beckford, was now dilapidated. The property of Fonthill passing through the Giffords, Wests, Delawares, Molyms, Hungerfords, Mervins, and Cottingtons, to the Beckfords, at last has become that of a Wood-street shopkeeper and shawl merchant. So of human destinies—

"Some are great, and some are small;
Some climb to good, some from good fortune fall,"

says old Cowley, and a more remarkable example of it than Fonthill can scarcely be found; the loom is already plied in the halls where taste and art once triumphed, and the hero of the Nile and Trafalgar was so sumptuously entertained.

Mr. Beckford was greatly chagrined to find that a confidential servant who was dangerously ill, but in whom he had placed unbounded confidence, had abused it. The fact was discovered during his illness. This broken trust had arisen from his own customary precipitate and unbounded confidence in those whom he took into his service. A clearance was made of this man and his connections, who afterwards slandered him.

It was at this moment, that in 1801, the intelligence was received of a decision relative to Mr. Beckford's West India property, which

struck the first blow at his fortune. An estate that had been in his family sixty years, and produced twelve thousand per annum, was suddenly taken from him, for want of title, by a decree of the Court of Chancery, the expenses of which must have cost him no inconsiderable sum, as that court was constituted in those days upon the principle of dispensing its decrees for its own emolument, and leaving the empty title of "justice" to satisfy its suitors when the property in hand would no longer pay costs. A careful frugality on the part of Mr. Beckford might have recovered the effect of these defalcations, and other losses to the extent of thirty thousand per annum, before the fall in the value of West India property took place. At that time it was reported that he paid one of the largest income tax duties in the kingdom; but this was no doubt an exaggeration. It cannot be supposed that he had lived within his income to such an extent as that thirty thousand per annum should have been of little moment to him. He had come in for nearly a million sterling, and one hundred thousand per annum, when he became of age, but there were embarrassments on some of his West Indian property, even at this time, exclusive of the loss of the estate in chancery, for lack of clear

title. Abandoning his affairs to agents and strangers, in whom he was apt to place too great a trust, he was continually plundered. His own habits were naturally in this respect of an enlarged kind; but of his own personal expenses, and his passion for works of art and taste, he kept an exact account, as well as of his buildings; these were his passions, and were somewhat costly. His agencies, however, and his servants were uncontrolled, and there are circumstances on record which show how enormous must have been the defalcations this way, particularly in the West Indies, even before property there became much depreciated. Thus in 1802, the threats of a law-suit there, were settled at an expense of forty thousand pounds; and in 1803 appearances of a more straitened income in a short time became more evident, and he began to retrench, sometimes where it was better he had practised self-denial in things that were superfluous. He suffered his agents in this respect to act for him, regarding himself those points alone, such as completing the Abbey, and carrying out the designs he long had at heart. The consequence was, as usual, that the economy of agents is too often costly to the reputation of principals. He continued, whenever he had money in hand, to make pur-

chases of pictures and objects of *virtu*, some of which, to the extent of four thousand pounds, he bought in Paris during a journey over there, during the peace of Amiens.

About this time, or in 1804, it was reported that a foreign grandee, a Count Egmont, came to England to make an offer to one of the Miss. Beckfords. He was possessed of an enormous fortune, and was said to be a well-informed man. He was accompanied by his brother. It appeared that he had made certain of the lady's heart, but she had the spirit to refuse him, probably reflecting that so abrupt a courtship, in the full confidence of his own pretensions, was not the exact mode of wooing an accomplished and high-spirited English lady.

The Abbey, at this time being so nearly completed, seems to demand an account of its appearance and proportions, as it was when it most excited the admiration of strangers, and was the habitation of its proud, accomplished, and affluent owner.

The fact that the Abbey stood at some distance from the old mansion has been already stated. The elevated ground upon which the foundation had been laid was dry and healthy, and the building upon the highest part.

The plan was that of a cross, three of the

arms of which were pretty nearly of the same length, though differing in breadth. The shortest was that formed by the entrance-hall, or rather vestibule. This was sixty-eight feet long by twenty-eight wide, and seventy-eight high. In this were stone stairs, which led to a landing-place, conducting into the octagon room, formed by the central tower, one hundred and twenty-eight feet high by thirty-five in diameter. The stairs themselves, at the extremity of the entrance-hall, occupied sixteen feet eight inches, by thirty. There were two stair-cases in the corner of the entrance-hall, one on each side the door-way, leading, that on the south side to what was called the minstrel gallery, over the door, and that on the left to a statue of the elder Beckford, over the centre of the doorway, by a passage in the wall. On the left of the landing-place, at the top of the stairs, was a circular stair-case, twelve feet six inches in diameter, with a newal in the centre, containing a flue. The gallery on the right hand, with the back to the entrance under the tower, was called St. Michael's Gallery, thirteen feet six inches wide. Facing, and an apparent continuation, after passing under the central tower, was King Edward's gallery, sixteen feet wide. The entire length, including the diameter of the octagon tower, which was passed

in going from one to the other, was nearly three hundred feet. The exterior measurement was two hundred and seventy feet from east to west, and three hundred and twelve from north to south, the entrance-hall facing the west. The central, or octagon tower was two hundred and seventy-six feet high to the pinnacles. The building east of the tower was forty-seven feet broad by ninety-five high, with two octagonal turrets at the angles on the east, and a hundred and twenty feet high by twenty in diameter.

In the central tower there were four arched recesses in the four unoccupied sides of the octagon, the lower part furnished, next the walls, with red curtains and sofas over all, in which were windows with pointed arches. The other five recesses contained the doorways to the hall, and the apartments on the east, and on the north and south, into the galleries of St. Michael and King Edward, already mentioned.

The gallery of King Edward was filled with books in recesses, cabinets, curious tables, and pictures, and the windows with painted and armorial blazoning. There was in this gallery an arched vestibule to an oratory beyond, at the extreme end, with closets on each side, to imitate abbey confessionals, and doors of open-work in the screens. There were spiral staircase com-

munications near the entrance, with the offices beneath, and on the right of the entrance to the gallery there was a china room.

St. Michael's tower, on the opposite side, passing across the octagon tower southwards, contained recesses for books and cabinets, and had a groined ceiling, five windows to the west, three to the east, and one to the south, ornamented with armorial bearings and historical figures in painted glass. It was hung with purple and scarlet draperies. At the southern end of this gallery, on the west side, were the yellow drawing-rooms, so called, with book-cases and cabinets richly furnished; and on the north side a green cabinet room. There were also staircases to bed-rooms above, and two were on the same floor. A passage, with arched windows, led from a room, called the brown dining-room, on the south, to the entrance-hall; thus forming, with the great hall on the north and St. Michael's gallery on the south, three sides of an oblong court, in the centre of which there was a fountain.

The eastern part, called the new buildings, contained some very spacious apartments, appropriated to cabinets and pictures, a private room in the north tower, and rooms unfinished in those towers. These were copied from the two

towers in Canterbury, at the gateway to St. Augustin's monastery. This part of the edifice within was never entirely completed.

The internal decorations were remarkably tasteful, and in unison with the effect designed to be introduced. The curtains in the galleries were double, and ran upon separate rods, one over the other, crimson under and purple over, so that, when drawn, the one drapery appeared like a border to the other, which was seen drawn as well as when undrawn, the two colours of the drapery producing a very tasteful effect. No chandeliers were used; but instead there were candelabra in the angles of the rooms, and between the windows, to support gilt or silver candlesticks, by which means the perspective of the long galleries was best displayed at night. Mr. Beckford also introduced chimney-places beneath the windows—an effect unusual, but by no means without an interest in the cold days of winter.

The effect of the entire building was very impressive, and the cost was greatly enhanced by architectural blunders. The tower was twice rebuilt, and that it lasted Mr. Beckford's time was singular. He had not long parted with it (this must be stated *par parenthese*, as the French have it) before he received a message

that a man on his death-bed wished to see him. He had then removed to Bath. He paid no attention to the first application, but receiving a second, and being told the man would not die easy unless he saw him, Mr. Beckford went and received the dying man's confession, that a burden had lain, and heavily too, upon his mind, and he wished to be eased of it. He said that he had strongly recommended that an arch should be turned under the tower, being at that time clerk of the works; for otherwise it was unsafe, and he was certain would some day fall, as he had repeatedly said to the architect. It appeared that the money had been advanced for the purpose, but the arch was never turned. The man's conscience was at least relieved; and when the tower did fall, it was singular it was no longer Mr. Beckford's property.

It is not easy, without the assistance of plans and engravings, to give a stranger an idea of such an edifice, so that the mind shall receive a clear and accurate impression of what, in imitation of the old English style of architecture, must necessarily be complicated, if it were no more than in the use of the terms which designate the different portions of such edifices. There are, however, several works extant which exhibit the exterior of the building with great

fidelity, and more than one which describe the interior, when it was in its most happy state.

In King Edward's gallery there stood, at the time when Mr. Beckford occupied the Abbey, a very rich and costly mosaic table, nine feet long by four feet six inches wide. Its rest was a carved oak stand, or frame, with four feet. The slab was called "pietre comesse." In the centre, in an oval compartment of mammillated oriental onyx, were specimens of rare jasper and breccia, with a broad border of bold arabesque, of the rarest marbles, and edged with variegated marble from the Borghese palace at Rome.

In the oratory, which formed five sides of an octagon, with gilt columns at the angles, and in the centre a richly chased gold lamp, suspended from the ceiling, there was an altar and a marble statue of St. Anthony, executed by Rossi. Every decoration of this gallery was, in fact, consistent with the idea of a monastic establishment. Taken as a whole, the architect deserved no praise. He had a noble opportunity to display his genius, had he possessed a particle of it; and, free from restraint, he might have done something far better than he produced. Not only the great tower was rebuilt, but the hall as well, the latter having been put up at first too small in proportion to the other parts of the building. As to

the interior, he might have been limited by Mr. Beckford's will, but it was not so in the exterior portion. Neither genius nor fancy were displayed by Mr. Wyatt in the edifice any more than in various others of the undertakings committed to his superintendence and construction.

The views from the building are very diversified and extensive, and the Abbey, in turn, was a conspicuous object in every direction. The woods of Wardour Castle and the woods of Stourhead were visible, a great range of Somersetshire, and the woods about Longleat. The spot is at present well worthy of a visit, though despoiled.

To interrupt the narrative, speaking of Stourhead, all the world knows that Sir Richard Colt Hoare, the owner, wrote a history of Wiltshire; and when he came to that part in which he wished to describe Fonthill, he was naturally desirous of giving an account of so remarkable a place, but hearing how difficult of access Mr. Beckford was, and also having no means, through any mutual friend, to see the place, he was much puzzled how to accomplish his object. At last, seeing no other mode, he wrote to Mr. Beckford, requesting permission to come himself or to send a competent person to draw up the description he desired. He received a reply, "per return,"

in terms of great politeness, saying Sir Richard was perfectly welcome to come at that or any other time for the purpose he desired. Sir Richard, in consequence, chose a day in which he heard Mr. Beckford was to be absent in town, in order not to intrude upon his privacy. He spent some hours in taking notes upon the different parts of the Abbey and grounds. He had no idea that Mr. Beckford was at home, until, just as he was leaving, a servant requested him to step into one of the rooms he had not yet seen, and upon entering it he saw Mr. Beckford himself, and the table laid out for a repast. Sir Richard was never more surprised in his life, when Mr. Beckford hoped he had been pleased with what he had seen, assuring him that he would ever find the Abbey open to him, when he felt inclined to pay it a visit, and then requested Sir Richard would take a seat at the table after his labours, because at that late hour it was impossible he could reach Stourhead in time for his own. Sir Richard at once complied, and spent the evening very agreeably; and on his taking his departure, his host repeated the compliment he had before tendered. This story, Mr. Beckford told a friend, was substantially correct; "but he must have known I was at home. I thought it a great pity that, as

the poor man had spent the whole day in going over Fonthill, he should be turned out *impransus*. Besides, as he was an accurate describer, I thought it probable he might be inclined to give a true and particular account of what he and everybody else considered the greatest curiosity in the whole place."

"Then that was the reason you exhibited yourself?"

"Why, not exactly," said Mr. Beckford; "but when he met me, his wondering gaze was extraordinary. You never saw a poor man so much astonished as when I suddenly pounced upon him. Had I been a whole Gorgon, he could not have been more petrified. I almost wished I had not been so civil to him, for he has been rather insolent to some of my forefathers in his book. I am that way connected with the Protector Somerset. Sir Colt, in giving the pedigree of that family, mentions the abominable story of the Duke of Somerset's divorce from his first wife, Catherine, daughter of Sir William Fillot, '*quia pater ejus ante nuptias eam cognovit.*' Why should he rake up such a story, which, if true, everybody had forgotten? It spoils a fair pedigree. Collins and other peerage writers drop Catherine Fillot very gently!"

Wyatt blended different styles in the building, and died before its completion. The western portal was too high, seen from without; and yet that could not be avoided, owing to the elevation of the floor of the octagon room, from whence the interior view balanced the defect. The mixture of styles could hardly be avoided; and there were within certain adaptations, necessary to the convenience and comfort of modern times, that forbade a close adherence to the confined passages and cramped spaces of the buildings of which the whole was professedly an imitation. Modern ideas are more liberal and expanded. Hence the miserable imitations of what are called old English churches, which deform our streets, and do not harmonise with modern feeling, which agrees with the later style of Henry VII. much more, and even that requires in some cases enlargement. But for the miserable, heavy, gloomy specimens of the middle ages, of course having no reference to our noble cathedrals, the introduction at present can only be taken as a proof of that standing still, and in many cases retrogradation of the ecclesiastical mind, which is a great blot upon modern intellectual advancement. At Fonthill the style externally kept was advanced within to keep pace with the more enlarged ideas of comfort and convenience which

have so happily triumphed over bigotry, and a creed that, while it added to the pomp of religion, rendered it subservient to very different purposes. The Abbey at Fonthill was not without its faults, but these were, in many cases, to be attributed to subsequent changes and additions in the plan. As it stood, it was the finest and purest specimen in its day of that style of modernized architecture in England. Mr. Beckford himself stated that the entire cost was 273,000 pounds, odd hundreds.* The cost was principally for workmanship. The materials were on the estate. Most assuredly no individual in this country ever before exhibited so gigantic a structure as the genius of Mr. Beckford displayed here, and all in the finest taste. It was, in fact, the great work of his life.

It must be acknowledged that, if the Abbey enjoyed great celebrity under its tasteful owner, the grounds were perfectly answerable to its beauty. There was every variety of surface. Here winding vales, there steep ridges, hills, dells, knolls, and lakes. The Abbey was approached by two ways, one of which bore little resemblance to the other. On the north-east,

* Stated by Mr. Beckford himself at Lansdown to Mr. Cyrus Redding.

the approach from Hindon—a burgh, both members of which were once nominated by Mr. Beckford—the road wound round the side of a hill, ascending gradually among woods of a variegated character and form, in which aged and gnarled oaks and old elms were conspicuous among young plantations. The character of the scenery here its owner had studied to render as wildly natural as possible. All was rustic. Even the lodges were common, and the twisted trees, meeting overhead, carried on the deception, until, emerging on a sudden, the Abbey, in all its imposing mass, came suddenly upon the eye. No one understood the force of contrast better than Mr. Beckord. He used to make his dwarf servant open the great doors of Fonthill Abbey hall, between twenty and thirty feet high. Drapery in his rooms was made often subservient to a sudden burst of light, the brilliance of which was concealed through the shadow cast by its judicious arrangement.

Another road, about a mile in length, which led up to the Abbey, passed through a most romantic wood into a deep dell, and then ascended. In some places it was so dark that the foliage was impervious to the sight. The favourite points of view were numerous, the walks and drives extensive. The Alpine gar-

dens, Beacon-hill view, poets' and painters' solitudes, Knoyle corner and promontory, the terraces, clumps and masses of oak and pine, a noble kitchen garden, a flower garden unmatched in England, and the American plantation filled with the trees and flowering shrubs of North America in great beauty and profusion, the animals and wild fowl were all carefully kept by the owner for so many years that, to use his own words, he feared Heaven might be displeased—

"That in vain toys I throw my life away."

Mr. Beckford had emblazoned the windows with the armorial bearings of his family. It has been stated how fanciful and imaginative he had been in his youth regarding John of Gaunt, some property that had once belonged to that prince having become the property of his father by purchase. His tutor had endeavoured to repress his early tendency to pride in these things. The windows of Fonthill were filled with painted glass of this character. It was a singular thing to notice in his conversation the contest between his consciousness of truth and his tendency to favour the obsolete notions of ancestral merit from such pretensions. At

Fonthill the Bedfords, Latimers, Gordons, and all connected with them collaterally had their arms in the window. Nor were they inappropriate ornaments. But Mr. Beckford, in conversation with one class of persons, could speak of heraldry as of a thing of importance, knowing, as he did, that since 1609 and the cessation of the visitations, the grants of arms were of no moment. To others he would make a jest of them if he found they were spoken of as idle vanities. He never resisted a truth put to him, even when it was adverse to his predilections. Thus, talking of pedigrees and genealogies, he one day asked Mr. Smith, the eminent printseller, who it was he saw him speaking to. The reply was, to a reverend gentleman who was descended from an individual that had married, in Virginia, in the reign of James I., the Princess Pocahontas, the daughter of the North American Indian cacique, or chief of the country. "Ah, that is a descent from a real sovereign of nature, not from one of our modern mushrooms. I wish I had such an one in my pedigree, and if the rev. gentleman could give it me, I would willingly give him any three of my ancestors he liked to pick out." In this way he showed the continued impress of his early pride about ancestry. He

showed his pretensions, too, on the paternal and maternal side as far back as the Magna Charta barons. It was a hobby he rode at Fonthill, aided by his old favourite the Abbe Maquin. The Heralds' Office people aided his fancy. Besides John of Gaunt, he considered he was connected with the Latimer family, and that he had a right to the barony. So imaginative had he been at times upon this point, that he could repeat long quotations from the sermons of old Bishop Latimer. He possessed a collection of the bishop's portraits, sometimes saying he fancied there was a resemblance between the bishop's portraits and his own.

In some humours he would burlesque the genealogies given out by the Heralds' College in later days. This originated in the notion he entertained of the more ancient claim of his own family compared to modern grants from the college, which are only absurd because they come a little later than others. He burlesqued a pedigree of a Sir Thomas Piso Pisebourne of Claude Fontaine, which he pronounced in a ludicrous, aristocratic manner, full of genuine wit and sarcasm, as supporitng a spic and span new issue from that repertory of fooleries, considered in connection with modern days, the Heralds' College.

His youthful hobby about John of Gaunt and other pedigrees, as reprehended by his tutor, had a hold upon his mind whenever the conversation took a turn that way with those who would be likely to partake in the idea of the virtue and truth of genealogies. His youthful pride had been nourished by the indulgence of his mother, who, he said, had spoiled him. Her family rank was high, and he was pleased to fancy what fact could hardly substantiate. When he was in the company of those who set no store upon such things, and accounted them a harmless vanity, his good sense, in spite of his predilections, led him to pronounce them the same—they were amusing. To such he would jest upon the subject. He was asked if the painted glass at Fonthill remained when he sold it, he replied—

"It was made for the building and went with it; it was appropriate there, and nowhere else. Mine is a family of some standing, and I had the quarterings properly executed. The Heralds' traced me up to a Norman cobbler—there they stopped." This was in joke upon the name of Oliver de Crespin, steward of Normandy, to whom his mother's ancestry were traced. "Heraldry, before the visitation ceased, was a useful study. Since then the heralds have

dispersed a vast quantity of spurious gentility. Did you know old Isaac Heard? He once came to me full of tribulation, to consult me about an application for arms made to him by a distant relation of a peer, who had succeeded to the honours of the family, and wished to have his own arms quartered with those of the peerage, but did not know what they were. Heard hunted until he was tired—no arms could he trace to that branch of the family. 'What shall I do, Mr. Beckford?' I was at that time studying heraldry. 'Do,' I replied, 'why, as he never had arms, help him out—make him some.'

"'Mr. Beckford!' said Heard, with affected surprise.

"'No coyness, Heard—make them. What do you do for good citizens when they get corporate offices?'

"'We search.'

"'But you don't find, you know.'

"'We are often not consulted at all, the coach-painter puts on something.'

"'You asked my advice—make them; don't lose a fee for the lack of finding material. I will invent them for you.'

"Sir Isaac laughed. A quartering did appear from somewhere—what revelation had been

made to Heard I never discovered. Those who had not arms before the visitations ceased, must have grants, if only to be regular. I was once very fond of that study,—you know that by my mother's side I was a Hamilton. You must remember Grammont's Hamilton—what a delightful book that is! He was an ancestor of mine of the Abercorn family.'

"'I went once from Tunbridge to Summer Hill, to see the place so much spoken of in Grammont—it belongs to a banker.'

"'The old house has been long pulled down, I suppose?' said Mr. Beckford. 'Modern heralds and modern houses do not associate in appearance with old houses and the paraphernalia of old heralds. They should look of the sixteenth century at least.'

"'I do not comprehend.'

"'Oh, they are smart fellows now, fresh as their newly-emblazoned vert, gules, and azure. They do not seem in character with old times; we should sniff the charnel-house about them; they should look yellow, worm-eaten keepers of musty parchments; a herald should be a rusty dry bones.'" *

When he was reminded of the fact that

* Recollections of the Author of Vathek.

Blackstone had given the death-blow to such inherited notions—notions as old as the Bible, in the fact that every man without collaterals must have a million of ancestors in thirty generations, and therefore the whole notion was absurd, from mathematical demonstration, of any virtue descending that way, his good sense overcame his predilections, and he admitted it was vanity. This admission, however, he never struck out to those who placed credit in hereditary merit from descent, but on the contrary, to such he would expatiate upon pedigrees, as if his early wishes and maturer reason were consonant.

He was now lodged in the magnificent abbey; the new buildings, or the eastern wing, were in quite an unfinished state, but on the south all was sufficiently completed for the reception of his vast household, which he does not seem as yet to have diminished, although he had sustained such heavy losses. He did not like to part with his domestics; he boasted of his trust in them; they had been with him many years. Some had been born from domestics of his father, and he had had three generations of one or two in his establishment.

He now lessened the number of such people around him, but continued to persevere in

carrying forward the building, large and lofty as it was, and when anything was done in a mode that displeased him he had it altered, cost what it might. In some things the architect, it appeared, ran counter to his ideas. Mr. Beckford complained that he was not only negligent, but obstinate. The great octagon room under the central tower was above a hundred and twenty feet high. There were galleries over the pointed arches, in the recesses of which were the windows; these galleries surrounding the interior of the tower, had openings of three pointed arches in each face of the octagon, which was the form of the tower. To prevent accident from falling down full a hundred feet into the room below, the architect had placed common balustrades of stone across each opening: they were unfit for such a spot, Mr. Beckford wishing them to be filled up with a shield in the centre, and open-work around. The octagon room was furnished with rich sofas and curtains far beneath. One day Mr. Beckford mounted to the gallery in disgust, and placing his back against the interior wall, and his feet against the edge of the stone balustrades, kicking with all his force, he disjoined them and tumbled them in ruin upon the stone pavement a hundred feet below, which was

shattered by the fall, and the furniture crushed or covered with rubbish. The balustrade was then replaced, after this costly specimen of his indignation, with something more agreeable and consistent with the character of the edifice. He disregarded expense in giving vent to his indignation, though at the moment tottering under the diminution of fortune already mentioned.

The great tower once took fire near the summit, and considerable expense was incurred in its restoration by employing relays of workmen. It was perfected, and the loss borne with a truly philosophical spirit.

In the completion of the abbey and perfecting the grounds, continual additions to his immense library,—for he was perhaps the most persevering reader of any individual in the country, both in English, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese literature, not to add his Persian acquirements,—he found his time fully occupied. He rose in the country pretty early, from a single camp bed without curtains, and taking a little chicken broth, set out to examine the works going on, walked to the garden, or rode on horseback for an hour. He then returned to breakfast, after which he sent for his steward, and transacted his household affairs. From

twelve till two he read the papers, or some new book, or conversed with his physician or the two or three artists who were constantly with him. If he saw visitors, which was rarely the case, it was during that interval. He then mounted his horse if there was no east wind, for then he would not stir out, and took a ride sometimes to the extent of twenty miles, returning to dinner, and closing the day with music and reading. Continually employed, he used to make it a boast that he never felt a moment's ennui in his life. He walked and rode fast; for, though not of a strong frame, he was light and agile, and his nervous energy great. His temper and habits were not formed for large societies. His mental resources were unbounded in extent, and the life he led from 1806 to 1822, in what may be called his seclusion at Fonthill, only realized Cowper's line:—

> "How various his employments whom the world
> Calls idle."

Before ceasing to make allusions to the fine structure which Mr. Beckford erected at Fonthill, it may not be amiss to mention some remarks upon it by a well-known antiquary. After observing that it was easy enough to judge from it the ideas of magnitude and gran-

deur which its owner exhibited, and that the architect, Wyatt, was not restrained by his employer, having had full scope for his professional talent, it asserts, that he was not sensible of his advantages, and incapable of employing them to eminent results. The hall was twice built, and the central tower three times, and so ill built that it fell at last. The result was, that Beckford was ill-seconded by the architect, and in relation to the central tower, shamefully treated, having paid for what was not performed. As it was, the edifice owed much of its imposing appearance to its owner. Mr. Hope, in remarking upon the designs of the same architect for Downing College, Cambridge, stated, that "neither the elevations nor sections displayed a single instance of fancy or genius to make up for their many faults. Everything alike in them was trite, common-place, and vulgar." It is now a matter of small moment that so noble a building as Fonthill Abbey should have been so misconstructed, but the history of its construction may be a useful lesson to men of fortune who indulge in the luxury of creating mansions which they would fain should do them an honour proportioned to the cost they lavish upon them.

Mr. Beckford, who had married his second

daughter, Susannah Euphemia, to the Marquis of Douglas in 1810, was alarmed by an attack of illness which reduced her to a state of great debility, from which she fortunately recovered, and in the following year gave birth to a son, the present Duke of Hamilton. It was about the same time that Miss Beckford married Colonel Orde, against her father's consent. The Colonel at the time had not more than his pay, being the son of a gentleman who had an estate of only fifteen hundred a year, but in all other respects the match was unexceptionable. Her father, who wanted her to marry an individual whom she could not approve, would not be reconciled to the connection. It was reported that Miss Beckford had ten thousand pounds from her grandmother, and the house at West End. Her father remained inexorable, and would not mention her name to anybody. Her husband in 1812 was ordered to embark for Nova Scotia, and she had just lain-in of a dead son, while her health would not permit her to accompany him. It was said that these circumstances did not reach his ears, or his known kindness of disposition might have overcome his wounded family pride, that detestable infirmity of minds otherwise generously and nobly constituted. Mrs. Orde died in 1818, leaving

two daughters, born in the years 1814 and 1816.

Some of Mr. Beckford's friends still hoped he would attend to parliamentary duties in 1810, and share in debates and public business; but he declared his antipathy more strongly than ever to taking any part in political squabbling, re-asserting his unfitness of temper and disposition for public life, and his decided preference for those studious pursuits, and the enjoyments of nature and art, which had ever been his great solace and delight from his youth upwards. "I am no solitary, heaven knows," he said; "but I would rather live in hermit solitude, than in the turmoil of faction and political intrigue."

CHAPTER V.

BURLESQUE NOVELS—SATIRICAL VERSES—PARODY ON GIFFORD'S POETRY—ADDRESS TO THE CRITICAL REVIEWERS.

ONE evening, with Dr. Lettice and his sister, Mr. Beckford read aloud a novel she had written, called "Louisa," criticising it as he went along, winding up in its praise, although it was, he said, too much in the bad taste of the time. This bad taste reigned paramount in the year 1796, and into the present century. It issued in its glory from the Minerva press in Leadenhall Street. It is no doubt a singular and degrading thing in literature, that it should have become, in the department of novel writing, and continue to be, as changeable in its fashion as the cut of the ladies' dresses, or the fashionable music. In the period of the Leadenhall Street reign, of which the present generation

can know little, just as in those days which succeeded it down to this hour, the style, mode of thinking, and sentimentality in novels, underwent continual mutations. A comparison of the novels of Mary Robinson, or Charlotte Smith, Ann Radcliff, and Monk Lewis, with those which succeeded by Scott, would explain the differences, and still more those of the present hour, set in comparison with them. All the world knows the ingenious ridicule of Swift, of the court and fashionable poetry of his day, in the stanzas beginning:

> "Fluttering spread thy purple pinions,
> Gentle Cupid, o'er my heart."

It was much with the same burlesque aim that Mr. Beckford, it has been seen at sixteen, ridiculed in an extraordinary manner for one so young, not only the style of the Vies Flamand, but the composition and execution of the works themselves, of those painters exhibiting great precocity in one not educated in the rudiments of art. In the present instance, at a more advanced age, seeing the absurdity and bombast that passed current for fine writing, and remarkably sarcastic as he was, he published in 1796 and 1797 two works, each in two small volumes. One of these was entitled, "Modern

Novel Writing, or the Elegant Enthusiast, with the Interesting Emotions of Arabella Bloomville, a Rhapsodical Romance, interspersed with Poetry. 2 vols. dmo. By the Right Hon. Lady H. Marlow. Published by G. and G. and J. Robinson, London, 1796."

The second satire of the same nature was entitled, " Amezia, a Descriptive and Sentimental Novel, interspersed with Pieces of Poetry. By Jacquetta Agneta Mariana Jenks, of Bellegrave Priory, in Wales. Dedicated to the Right Hon. Harriet Marlow; to which are added, Criticisms Anticipated. 2 vols. London, printed by and for Samson Low, 7, Berwick Street, Soho, 1797."

It is not possible for the generality of readers to comprehend the ridicule and sarcasm conveyed in the foregoing works, without perusing with attention beforehand one or two of the productions of the ruling taste of their departed era. Many who read them now would think them very flat and unmeaning, when they are really admirable. They are hardly, it is true, broad enough for the multitude, but persons of education will see their merit as satires. There is no trace in them of the several fashionable styles of novel writing which followed, and assuredly none of that which is to the present taste.

The first work commences, as was then the fashion, with a dedication. The present is to an anonymous Duchess from the authoress, Miss Marlow, dated from Hyacinth Lodge, March 31, 1796. After stating, to borrow the words, that "the captivating diffidence of your Grace's noble mind forbids me to prefix your name to this dedication; yet, when I affirm, that to all the exterior charms of person, and a loveliness beyond compare, you add the most engaging and condescending manners, joined to the extreme of every human virtue, it will be impossible that you should remain concealed; no, madam, the observant and adoring public will instantly discover my enchanting friend and patroness, whose greatness of soul cannot brook even the idea of flattery," &c.;—the dedication winds up as follows: "I have, indeed, endeavoured to unite correct, delicate, and vivid imagery, to an animated moral sensibility, and at the same time to enrich it by various incident, lively sallies, fashionable intrigue, picturesque description, and, in fine, to mark it with the striking features of a bold originality, without which, no daughter of the Muses can ever expect to produce that phœnix of literary zoology—a perfect novel."

The tale commences, as was the practice,

with a rural picture, which introduces the heroine:

"At the foot of a verdant declivity, overshadowed by woodbine, jasmine, and myrtle, and softly inundated by a sapphire rivulet that wandered through the neighbouring woods in serpentine simplicity, stood the sweet and elegant retired cottage of Arabella Bloomville. A majestic grove of aged oaks nodded in awful and sublime splendour on one side, while abrupt and fantastic rocks added dignity to the scene on the other. Here in spring were heard the mellifluous charms of the goldfinch, the throstle, the linnet, the blackbird, the cuckoo, and the woodlark, nor was the melancholy bird of evening silent, when the sun hid himself behind the western horizon. It was then that the pensive and matchless Arabella indulged her tender grief, and softly answered with her sighs to the pathetic melody of the feathered songstress."

The sweet Arabella, aged only seventeen, had a dear confidant in Miss Margaret Grimes, the companion of her infancy. The fatal experience of evil had more than doubled the years of the fair heroine, and every breast sympathised with such suffering excellence. Henry Lambert, in his twenty-fourth year, the son of a father who had sat several sessions in the "British parlia-

ment with the most noble and exemplary incorruptibility," is then brought on the scene. He had already fought in three campaigns, encountered a storm at sea, and broken his collarbone when hunting. His hazards of suffering required every religious consideration to sustain on the part of the gentle Arabella. She lived in a house in a forest so much "out of repair, that the distant bells from the village had a peculiar pathos, when the benighted traveller reposed himself in the hawthorn grove. This could not be prevented by the usual operation of foresight, nor did the howling of the yard dog during the tempest, in any manner decrease the general perturbation. Lady Maria, indeed, who slept in the attic story, first caught the alarm, and rushing through the flames, descended by a back staircase into the garden. The clock struck ONE at the moment, and the awful solemnity of the scene was horribly impressive. Yet but a little before she might have collected herself with propriety, even though the danger had been ten times more imminent, for in all active emergency, nature is prone to subside and yield the palm to the consistency of power. The expected visitors not coming the next day, rendered the situation of Lady Maria still more perplexing, because she had promised

the Duchess and the Miss Pebleys to meet them in the rooms that evening."

What delightful confusion of facts and personages! Who is Lady Maria, and the Pebleys? and what flames did the former escape? Lady Maria, we learn, was the wife of Col. Lambert, and the parent of Henry—the Pebleys were nobodies. We find that, for a time, all intercourse between the charming Arabella and Henry is broken off, without any ascribed cause, upon which she writes a sonnet. The last part of this sonnet is as follows, and was no bad imitation of the prevalent taste:—

"O, my loved Henry! should'st thou ever hear
How feebly flows the meditated lay,
While the pale moonshine gilds the chequered sphere,
Thou might'st again the distant theme display,
Might'st drop the appropriate plaudit of a tear,
And whisper sweetness to the charms of May."

By such amusements the divine Arabella beguiled threatening difficulties, "for the youthful mind is almost always amiable, while hoary time hardens the heart, alas! too often with the muscular anatomy."

Henry, meanwhile, is engaged in a siege in which he distinguishes himself, "by that prevailing security, which operates beyond the shafts of courage, or even the prevalence of despair."

The mode of attack is changed, in consequence of the commanding officer's horse being killed under him; this became the more necessary, "as vegetables were uncommonly scarce, and, what was still worse, no letters had arrived from England. It was, therefore, properly decided by the military council, that the theatres should be closed during the remainder of the week; nor need this be wondered at, for the commonest candles were three-and-sixpence each in the town, and there really was not a wheelwright to be found in the whole vicinity." What are called *non sequiturs* abound. A polite circle is described, in which a curate, Lord Giblet, Colonel and Lady Maria Lambert meet, at the castle of a Sir George Darlington, with a Countess of Fairville, and a sentimental lady, a Miss Lucinda. Lord Mahogany now appears on the stage, a high Tory, who declares "that the prevalence of sedition was become abominable, especially in this happy country, where the poor are equally protected with the rich, and which enjoys the most perfect constitution that the wisdom of man could invent, which is as incorruptible in its principle as generally beneficial in its practice." Having uttered this with an indignant tone of rage, he overturned the silver tea urn on Lucy Melville's favourite lapdog,

" which Major Pemberton had brought her from the East Indies, and to which she was attached with, perhaps, an improper, yet enthusiastic fondness."

The description of Arabella and her lover are in admirable burlesque, the very reprint of the glory of the Minerva school. Embarrassments, if not naturally introduced, must be obtained, and here the satirist is not wanting.

" It was one of those delicious nights when the heavens are bespangled with stars, and tranquil silence sits brooding over the autumnal plains, that Sir Peter Simpson's elegant gig drove by her open window: the lonely owl sung a horrible dirge to the murmuring stream, that meandered by the side of the road over which it passed, though the baronet himself was absorbed in the propriety of a general enclosure of waste lands. Now Margaret Grimes, having but just gathered a mistletoe, could not give the wondering Arabella any further means of unravelling the clue, for the most patient villagers were, for the most part, retired to their placid rest, and, unfortunately, the mail-coach had neither brought the oysters nor the French dictionary."

A General Barton is introduced, who writes poetry. Then a strange lady makes the ac-

quaintance of Arabella, and writes a sonnet, after which she tells her story, very touchingly, in the mode of that day; and when they had fully sympathized, "Arabella led her melancholy associate to a neat but humble cottage, where the attentive Margaret Grimes soon presented them with toast and butter, eggs, tea, cake, and other elegant refreshments."

In the course of the stranger's narrative, she says: "On a fine summer's evening I went without my mamma to a Mr. Gifford, a gentleman somewhat known in the literary world, and who has written a satirical poem, called the Baviad.* This terrible writer, who modestly styles himself the modern Persius, is a little, sour-looking fellow, but prodigiously powerful with his pen, for he is desperately severe; and though he cannot write a line of genuine poetry himself, yet he is extremely alert in abusing those who can. He was formerly a metaphorical bear-leader to Lord Belgrave, and, after his return from the continent, became the literal tutor of a real bear, which his lordship had brought home with him, and which was one of the valuable acquisitions he had made on his travels. Now, you must know that, one day,

* Gifford had not, in 1796, got into the editorship of the "Quarterly." It was not then in being.

Mr. Gifford, being negligent of his charge, suffered the bear to eat a whole basket of butter, which the butterman had left in the passage. This threw his lordship into a great passion, and he immediately discharged the tutor for his carelessness, and placed the hopeful pupil under a more attentive master. It was at this period I paid my visit, and the poor man was quite in a fury at his disgrace, in having his bear taken from him, and, consequently, he devoted himself to satire, by way of revenge."

When the lady's story was concluded, she "began to weep again, and the susceptible Arabella hastened to pour a healing balm into her recent wounds, then kindly led her to her chamber, and wishing her a good night, retired also to enjoy the refreshing slumber of innocence. At the same time, Margaret Grimes ascended to her little garret, and the cat slept in the kitchen."

Then followed a burlesque upon the ghost stories and fearful adventures which continually made a part of the narrations of the time in novel writing. To this succeeded attempts made upon the virtue of Amelia, one of the characters in the story, of which she herself writes the blooming Arabella an account, charging the offence upon Lord Mahogany; and only

hoping when she fainted, his lordship had not been guilty of any outrage upon decency in her own regard, as his lordship assured her he had not.

On perusing this afflicting epistle, "Serene dejection sat upon her countenance, and her mild eyes were expressive of the resignation she had imposed upon a heart alive to every sentiment of friendship and benevolence."

Henry Lambert appears again upon the scene in a paroxysm of grief and anxiety, at an inn, where, retired to his chamber, he calls for a boiled fowl and a bottle of Burton ale; and in a few hours afterwards composes an acrostic on the beauteous Arabella, with whom he has a touching interview not untainted with jealousy; whilst she, poor creature, was solitary and inconsolable, there being with her only the Earl of Pochlinton, Mr. Paul Dodsworth, Mrs. Kemp, the three Miss Barnards, General Barton, Sir Obediah Loftus, and——here the servant would have proceeded, but in a minute or two the door opened, and pale, breathless, with an expression to which the pencil only could do justice, appeared the figure of Henry Lambert. Henry fixed his eyes upon Arabella, and then in a fit of jealousy left the room as hastily as he had entered it. The lady followed, overtook, and

addressed him, "Dear sir,—dear Henry! I am sorry to see you so agitated. I am afraid something is wrong?"

"Wrong! wrong! and do you, Arabella—inhuman Arabella, insult me by such an enquiry! Wrong—am I not the most cursed of human beings?"

"I hope not — for your happiness." She knew no longer what she intended to say; nor did he give her time to recollect; he eagerly rivetting his eyes on her face and grasping her hands between his own—cried, "my happiness! — and what of my happiness? Is it not gone—lost for ever? Have you not destroyed it? Damnation and distraction — why do I linger here?" He then plunged away, and rushed out at the door, where his servant waited for him with a chaise.

A chapter follows with regret and lamentation at the death of General Barton's grandmother, who for thirty years before had been in a declining state, with little hopes of a permanent recovery. The General was introduced to his dying relative by Miss Lucinda Howard, to witness her untimely end; and a death so sudden naturally much affected the company. General Barton in deep anguish was soon fixed in the possession of the inheritance of his ancestors.

He could not forget his grandmother's virtues, the dignity of her form, and the graces of her mind. The gentle force of friendship could hardly drag him away from her remains. "Yes," he soliloquised, "it is past! The only tie of nature that remained to attach me to existence, is now dissolved. Life has no more a charm, nor death a pang for me! O, thou who wert lately so talkative, so kind, so venerable—thou art fled—fled for ever — the ravages of sickness have defaced thine awe-inspiring wrinkles, and left there a spectacle of horror! O my grandmother! my grandmother!!"

An elegant tablet was erected to her memory by some gentlemen of a neighbouring county, who had had no personal knowledge of her; and one of the first poets of the age furnished her a beautiful epitaph, every line of which goes to the heart. The good lady had had a poetical vein herself, but had been, unfortunately, subject to fits of insanity; besides which, it was reported, she would in her latter days never read any book but the Bible.

"Ye who the merits of the dead revere,
Who hold misfortune sacred, genius dear,
Regard this tomb, where Lady Barton's name
Solicits kindness with a double claim!
Though nature gave her, and though science taught
The fire of fancy, and the reach of thought;

Severely, doom'd to suffer grief's extreme,
She passed, in maddening pain, life's feverish dream;
While rays of genius only served to show
The thickening horror and exalt her woe.
Ye walls, that echo'd to her frantic moan,
Guard the due records of this grateful stone!
Strangers to her, enamoured of her lays,
This fond memorial to her talents raise.
For this the ashes of a fair require,
Who touched the tenderest notes of pity's lyre;
Who join'd pure faith to strong poetic powers,
Who in reviving reason's lucid hours
Sought in one book her troubled mind to rest,
And rightly deemed the book of God the best."

What a satirical lesson in regard to the flattery of epitaph writing, and of panegyric unmerited. The satire is too keen for the uninstructed in that quiet kind of censure, which is "keen and polished as your sword," but it is not the less worthy, that only the intelligent comprehend it.

Mrs. de Malthe, a character too common in the world at all times, but at that moment marked by the prevalent peculiarities, an orthodox believer, an intense blue, a bigot, and in manners vulgarly refined, is brought upon the scene, with Lucinda Howard the poetess. The latter has written a poem which she recites, and then the Lady Blue, in consequence of its excellence, advises her to extend her studies to the

whole circle of the sciences, and go at once into a study of Greek medals, and the interpretation of the word Gehenna.

A cutting dissertation on the mode of letter-writing prevalent in that day follows. The passion of Arabella for her Henry continues to increase; and "when the star of evening began its gradual course towards the antipodes, she sauntered from her cottage in that frame of mind which disappointment naturally inculcates."

The dress is then described of a swain whom she met, and for a moment forgot her Henry. She entered into a dialogue with him, and he vowed eternal constancy towards her. He then rode away with the view hollo! She heard that Henry had been in the vicinity; and in consequence indited verses "To a dead Goldfinch," in which she brought in Henry as a part of the burthen. The verses are exactly such as will be found in old Magazines at the close of the last century; and were popular with the Rosa Matildas of that day, only a little exaggerated to retain the effect of caricature:—

"Poor little bird that died one day,
As kings and other people may;
Ah! what would gentle Henry say,
To find your life thus past away.

But Henry, O my pretty dear!
Is gone far off and is not here:
Therefore does Arabella fear,
He is not over-much sincere.

When next the morn begins to rise,
Again thou wilt not ope thine eyes;
And thus my faithless Henry flies,
And leaves me looking at the skies.

Begone then, balmy zephyrs, go,
And let my cruel Henry know,
That on this fruitful earth below
No other man would use me so!

My goldfinch died—how did he dare
To leave me lost in deep despair?
Then let each maiden sunk in care,
Of lovers such as mine beware!"

This Arabella wrote in the open air; her left knee bent on the ground, her right the desk for her paper.

After this effusion she felt her mind relieved. A lecture and a duel, all in the most approved novel-writing style of the day, follow; commencing furiously and ending in smoke. Then comes a masquerade *à la mode*. In the next chapter figures a Countess of Fairville and a Lord Mushroom, with a young lady named Wilhelmina. The chapter concludes with an Ode to Æolus.

In the second volume Arabella's parentage is unexpectedly discovered by her likeness to her father; and the demonstration of a strawberry on the arm, confirms the supposition. Arabella is the child of the Countess Fairville. She fell at once, as in duty bound, at the feet of her new mamma, and bathed her hands in tears. The Countess pressed her to her heart, and it was seven minutes and a half before either of them spoke. The countess broke silence by observing that within fifteen months she had taught herself German; and Dr. Philbert gravely observed, "that the man who can be insensible to the charms of virtue, must be a bad moral character, and viciously inclined."

The company adjourned to the cedar parlour, and Arabella withdrew to recover herself, for which a few hours sufficed. When the company had partaken of some iced-creams, and washed their faces in vinegar, they became more calm, and began to exhibit their wit. Lord Damplin, who was present, took the trembling hand of Arabella, and confessed his love. With a smile of ineffable sweetness, scratching her back with her fan, she replied, — "No, my Lord, I can never be yours; my affections are engaged to another gentleman, and I will never bestow my hand where I cannot give my heart."

This reply, so sentimental and so new, charmed all present. His lordship, unable to resist the shock, burst into a flood of tears, and said, had he thought matters would turn out so, he would have gone to Romford that day, to see the boxing match between Johnson and the Jew.

The discovery of Arabella's parentage, the jokes of a Jack Deeply, and remarks on the crest-fallen lover, Lord Damplin, formed the discourse for the remainder of the day, to which Lucinda added her contributions in the following verses:—

" What is this sentimental love,
  This spell of the romantic mind,
Whose flimsy texture fancy wove
  Too weak the impassioned heart to bind?

Does it from nature spring? ah, no!
  Nature the airy form denies:
Is it by reason bred? If so,
  Why always hid from reason's eyes!

Is it a quick, inspiring flame
  That animates with love the heart?
No, its cold dictates strangely aim
  A mental fervor to impart.

Dull apathy, or frozen age,
  The phantom conjured first to view,
The policy or envious rage
  Of those who ne'er true rapture knew.

Away! no more my thoughts detain,
Illusive, visionary sprite!
May love's warm stream through every vein
Roll gay desire and fond delight.

And may the youth whose sparkling eyes
For love and mutual bliss were sent,
Ne'er damp my ardours as they rise,
With the chill clouds of sentiment."

This must be admitted to exhibit the true picture of the prevalent poetic vein among novelists between 1790 and 1800,—but to the story.

Everybody was delighted with Lucinda's verses and singing; but Mrs. de Malthe objected to the words, as having too much meaning in them to please people of fashion, and the Countess herself, glancing her eyes upward, exclaimed, "Well, Miss Howard (Lucinda), indeed, I wonder at you."

This cutting observation set the diffident Lucinda crying ready to break her heart, which Major Pemberton observing, slyly looked at Jack Deeply, and said, "You see, my dear boy, we are up to you!" The gloom of the moment was consequently dispersed, as the heavy vapors of morning fly before the beams of the sun. The Countess then gave a feast to her tradesfolk, in honour of the fortunate discovery of her

daughter; at which the guests were arranged alphabetically, according to the names of their trades, their precedence being amicably settled accordingly.

The next scene discloses a Lord in tribulation. Lord Mahogany is found writhing in agony. He has had poison administered to him by an Italian Countess named Negri, while his lordship had taken it into his head to poison the Countess. He entered the apartments of the Countess eating some conserves, kissed the back of her neck, and asked her to partake of his sweetmeats, to which she readily acceded, from foreseeing it would be a reason to invite him to partake of some envenomed wine in return. The Countess ate the conserves, those he gave her being poisoned. Then complaining, on her side, of thirst, she filled two large glasses with wine; one of which his lordship accepted, and drank off. He then went away perfectly satisfied; but first borrowed an umbrella from the coachman, as he was going to General Barton to crack a bottle together.

The poison thus doubly administered, was designed to be slow in its operation; and his lordship, as a precaution to prevent suspicion, resolved to travel without any one knowing he had visited the Italian Countess. He had pre-

viously received a letter, letting him into the secret of the Countess's kindness towards him, which he had put in his pocket without reading. He opened it and found the fatal truth. He was returning on horseback, when he felt the poison begin to operate. He was first parched with fever; a cruel pain seized his bowels, his eyes were burning in their sockets, his strength began to fail, and he dismounted. Then, leaning against a stile, he took out his pencil and asses' skin, not to write his will, but to compose a sonnet to "The Lark;" but he had scarcely finished it, when he fell at the foot of a tree, where some clowns discovered him, and brought him to the nearest house, which happened to be the former cottage of the fair Arabella.

Here a long rigmarole of burlesque exclamations of persons supposed to be in their last agonies, under similar circumstances, is exceedingly well put; the ravings common in novels of the time being ludicrously parodied.

General Barton prescribes a decoction of simples to remove the effect of the poison. His lordship revives only so far as to make his ravings intelligible: "I am not dead. Why art thou come to torment me before my time? I know thee well; thou art an elephant. Hah! how he handles the cards—help, help—my poor

pig is in convulsions—how the tree laughs—the duck whispering the bishop is the Contessa Negri—see, see, they make bulrushes of her hair—torment me not—I did not kill her."

The General is astonished, naturally enough; Lord Mahogany raves on:—

"Forgive me, holy man, forgive me!" said his lordship, "I am a wretch! I have thrown away a jewel! I'll give a hundred guineas for a silver muffin! What a storm it blows! and the mule speaks Greek! Can you dig up the world? Had I met her in the grave, for she has sweet lips, perhaps—I might have given my vote for peace! But, oh! 'twas war, war, war! How they bleed! Thousands, ten thousands dead! Such a waste of murder! Bring the wheelbarrow, for I will fly to Naples!" Here a tear or two rolled down his glowing cheek. "I know not where I am: my ideas wander! Is this my head. Look! the warming-pan is on fire! Is there nobody will go for me to Wapping, and bring me a bason full of stockings?"

General Barton answered, "There is!"

"Will he be faithful?" asked the poisoned lord.

"I will be responsible for him with my life, he is a brother fox-hunter," said the General.

"Give him these keys!" said his lordship,

and he then, describing every particular, bade him go, and bring him a well that was in a certain part of the garden.

Amelia then entered the room, and he begged her to sit—

"My dear woman," said he, "had you but lighted the fire in time, we might have gone to Banbury in a nutshell—but oh, this cursed war! I voted for it—how it burns my brain. Bring me a feather, for I would fain speak a word to the pigeon-house."

The sick peer's delirium soon after returned, and he continued to rave. General Barton and Major Pemberton sat up till a late hour playing backgammon. He threatened vengeance on himself, and it was difficult to keep him in bed. Then again he raved:—

"Ah! look how fiercely the faggots blaze. O conscience, conscience! The troops march—alas! The war is mine—and the sight of that collyflower breaks my heartstrings. Do you imagine I am blind! He stands by the curtains, and asks me to buy a ferret. Ah, that's a serious question. Look at the blooming bride. She is watching the flames with her nose in a gallipot—now she is going off. See, in what agony she dies; but she did not go to war—she was a grasshopper."

Lord Mahogany then appeared more easy, and took some refreshment from the hands of the gentle Arabella. His frenzy soon again returned. He jumped out of bed, and bruised himself dreadfully against the walls of the room; "to drive away," as he said, "a salamander that was playing on the harpsichord. Look! look at that pelican, how it smiles upon the imps of darkness. They chain the sun to a coal tub. What a world it is, who can tell but it may be given to me, for my library is full of jackals, and virtue a mere carpet—murder, war, murder, cannot go unpunished!"

In this shocking way he raved. The decoctions given him by General Barton did him no good. His wild eyes became sunk in his head, and, glaring dismally on all around, he cried, "Let me measure the moon; 'tis full of marrow. Faugh! but oh, this torrent of lobsters. Stop them. They curl the heavens. Bottle up the war in a corn-field, and put my vote in hell. Hold me—the room is in flames, and the castle totters; what a serpent is the minister, he has stung mankind! I am a crocodile!"

"He now caught hold of the bed-clothes, as if to save himself, and, giving a dreadful shriek, *expired!*

"Major Pemberton was so much disconcerted at the suddenness of the event, that it prevented his going out shooting. The rest of the company walked upon the terrace, to vent their reflections on the extraordinary events they had witnessed, and in the evening there was a concert."

A chapter containing "a variety of singular events follows," admirably taking off the abruptness and want of connection, the trivialities and inconsistencies in the incidents related in the tales of that period. The following is an excellent parody upon the style of the descriptions of natural scenery then common:—

"A velvet lawn gently sloped from the house down to the river, and served as pasture for some hundreds of sheep, which enriched the land, while they animated the scene. A rising wood stretched itself to a considerable distance on the east, its stems being washed by the river, and its feathered branches seeming to bend, to receive the refreshing moisture. On the west the eye wandered over an immense park; the ground was beautifully irregular, wild, and diversified with scattered herds of deer and cattle, groups of trees, with here and there a spire or steeple peeping over their heads, and the view was terminated by rising hills." The same kind of description is pursued, with the addition of

flowers, shrubs, and the like, until the late Lord Mahogany's cave was reached, where he used to stretch himself supinely on a bed of moss. It was now the property of Lord Charles Oakley, who used to indulge in the same luxury, and, with Henry Lambert, sometimes smoke a comfortable pipe, "when the soft radiance of the moon played upon the pearly bosom of the adjacent waters."

Amalia had a lover gone to Spain, and one day she took it into her head to go out trout-fishing, when she was suddenly surrounded by six men with crape over their faces, and borne off to a forsaken manor of the Oakley family, where solemn stillness reigned, and no voice was heard but from that domestic male bird which cries, cock-a-doodle-doo. Then, passing up crooked staircases and along endless winding passages, she entered an ancient apartment wainscoated with oak, having grated casements, and the walls hung with tapestry. Then her guards took the gag off they had previously placed in her delicate mouth, informed her those were her apartments, and then departed, singing, "Rule Britannia." Here she was imprisoned in the most approved mode, and gave herself up to thoughts upon speculative philosophy, and soon discovered the power of the human will,

by the exertion of which she found out, that people could conquer both sleep and hunger. She was now permitted to sail on a lake in a magnificent barge, bought by one of the city companies for fourteen pounds, twelve shillings, and ninepence halfpenny. The party was brilliant. The fishes sported in the vessel's silver wake, with a fascinating, piscatory, lightheartedness, when Lucinda Howard fell overboard, but was picked up by Mr. Squares,* assisted by Mr. Bilbo, his coadjutor, and was thus preserved. Mr. Gifford's head, of a solid texture, was assailed by a copy of Herodotus, which did it no harm, though it awoke the spleen of the satirist, who extemporised the following verses:—

> "By Jove, I will lampoon you all,
> Except Sam Slybore—great and small,"

The threat alarmed the ladies. Lucinda Howard, just rescued, fell in love with her reverend deliverer, who, dripping wet, declared what vengeance his next "British Critic" should inflict. When the lady recovered, she penned an ode to her deliverer. Her passion increased, and Mr. Gifford became her comforter, and so enamoured that he presented her with a copy of

* Archdeacon Nares and Mr. Beloe, of the Critical Review.

his most laborious literary labour, called The Meviad. Yet this generosity could not shake the lady's constancy to his literary rival. "She pined in thought, but Mr. Nares was still insensible. She sought consolation in writing an 'Ode to the Moon,' with which he was so delighted that he called for a glass of gin and water."

The next chapter relates that Henry Lambert had attained the rank of full colonel, and he was much praised among those elegant young ladies, who having more beauty than fortune, are always to be disposed of to gentlemen of consideration. Henry, however, thought only of his Arabella. In politics he had a glorious affection for our unrivalled constitution in church and state, and a proper contempt for the hunger and sufferings of the poor, while greatly respecting the ornamental part of society, as the lords, aldermen, parliament men, crimps, justices of the peace, bishops, deans, archdeacons, and attorneys.

That same night Henry had a dream. He was on an island in the Atlantic, so he fancied, covered with inhabitants, and its ports full of vessels, abundance in its fields, and all countenances denoting cheerfulness and prosperity. "But after a little time I beheld a band of ruffians possess themselves of all the power of

the government, and divide among themselves the riches of the land. The liberties of the people were quickly annihilated; they plunged into destructive wars to gratify the selfishness and ambition of those rulers; they were reduced to famine by every species of the basest monopoly, and the honest and industrious poor were consigned to ignominy and treated with contempt. Then the people assembled in great multitudes to complain, and petitioned their oppressors to grant them some relief, but they found none. Their just remonstrances were deemed seditious and treasonable, and the men who had thus seized the reins of government, published an order forbidding all persons to assemble or even to murmur; and afterwards a decree was passed that the tongues of all complainants should be cut out as a proper punishment for their audacity. When this 'strong measure' was carried into execution, there was a dead silence throughout the nation, and order and tranquillity were pretty generally restored. Now methought the name of this strange country was THE ISLAND OF MUM." *

The next chapter, entitled "Female Frailty,

* All who have read the history of the reign of George III. will comprehend at what period this was written and to what it refers.

and a Misfortune," is a tolerably exact representation of the taste of the time, in which the fair Lucinda is

> "Robbed of that which nought enriched him,
> And made her poor indeed."

From the two critics already mentioned, met by Lucinda at an inopportune moment, she caught a bilious fever. Both were very kind to her during her illness, but she died off, and a schoolmaster at Dedham in less than eight months composed a touching epitaph to be placed over her ashes. An accident through eating a dinner cooked in copper stewpans killed twelve of the characters who had before figured in the novel. Arabella, grief-struck and in agonies, applied to certain of her friends for consolation. She met instead with a philosopher who spent his solitary hours in useful and profound studies. He had calculated how many hairs can grow upon a human head, and how many millions of words womankind utter every twenty-four hours throughout the world. Reducing these words into letters, was to be the work of the approaching year. Then he told her he had up to four o'clock that morning lived precisely 2,932,848,000 seconds, yet how soon were they fled! A life of 33,945 days

was granted to a few. He shed tears, he told her, when he reflected upon the destruction of animal life caused by man, who had a more savage nature than the tiger. The most delicate female at twenty-five years old he computed must have eaten to her own share sheep 267, beeves 39, calves 48, hogs 51, chickens 3256, ducks 1840, besides other poultry and fish, with an abundance of corn, wine, oil, herbs, and fruit. At this calculation Arabella and Margaret Grimes laughed immoderately, and the old man moved off in disdain.

Henry, meanwhile, having cropped his hair, the then prevailing mode, and putting on his boots and spurs, waited on Mr. Pitt to thank him for the care he had taken of the British nation. Henry had come into an immense property, with two boroughs at his command. Mr. Pitt received him with more than his usual candour, and presented him with a goblet of wine and two macaroons. Henry, captivated by the minister's condescension, offered him a pinch of snuff, and with pleasing diffidence demanded if THE ACT FOR GENERAL SILENCE was passed? George Rose, who was present, assured him it was, and that Lord Grenville, Lord Mansfield, Mr. Windham, and himself were the happiest of men, in spite of the high price of bread and

the increasing weight of taxes, which he jocularly observed did not affect them. Henry, getting more intimate and easy in the presence of such sublime personages, earnestly entreated to have a basin of pea soup, but this Mr. Pitt absolutely refused, because he was under the necessity of going down to the house. Henry that evening wrote a comedy, which he carried next morning to the theatre of Covent Garden, and the manager received it favourably, as it had no plot, and was full of tumbling, kicking, laughing, and buffoonery, it met universal applause.

Arabella in the meanwhile sat on the margin of a murmuring stream reading her beloved Ariosto and eating golden pippins, while the tears incessantly chased one another down her innocent nose, as she reflected upon the instability of her heart's dear lord — her Henry Lambert. She also yielded her soul to the delusions of poetry, and composed a very clever enigma. She opened her cottage to company, hoping it would withdraw her agitated mind a little from the contemplation of her sorrow. Card-tables were set, and Mr. Bilbo (Beloe) cut in as partner with the beautiful Miss Bradwall, who asked him if he had written his Arabian story-book himself. He replied that however he might like to cut up the works of other

persons, he was as sore as any one when his own were attacked. Mr. Gifford, who was of the party, seeing that matters began to wear a serious aspect, read an Ode of his own, first taking a pinch of blackguard from Mr. Square's box. He then recited an Ode, and was going to inflict again, when the supper was announced, and spared the company the pain.

In a parody on one of Gifford's productions, Mr. Beckford affixed this remark.

"The author's description of himself elucidates his own character in the happiest and most fortunate manner. Everybody must surely respect and honour a man who gives it under his own hand, that his soul spurns the malign controul of the crowd, that he has a fixed contempt for everything wrong, that his cheerfulness can subdue affliction, and that he can sing like a nightingale to charm the lonely hour. This, it must be acknowledged, is, indeed, a glorious song."

Mr. Beckford gives here an admirable burlesque of Gifford and his style of poetry, the more excellent, because it is true to the letter, and as effective now as then, by reference to his versification. It is entitled an "Ode to the Rev. Mr. Ireland, in imitation of Horace." There were, of course, explanatory notes an-

nexed, as the author of the Mæviad would have done to his own verses.

" When howling winds and lowering skies
The light untimbered bark surprise,
Near Orkney's boisterous seas;
The trembling crew forget to swear,
And bend their knees, unused to prayer,
To ask a little ease.*

For ease the Turk ferocious prays,
For ease the barbarous Russe,—for ease,
Which Pitt could ne'er obtain,
Which Bedford rack'd amidst his store,
And liberal Clive, with mines of ore,
Oft bade for—but in vain.†

For not the liveried troops that wait
Around the mansions of the great,

* The surprise in which a light-timbered, or, as the poet has it, "a light untimbered bark," must be in when surprised by a storm is most happily expressed. The sailors forgetting their oaths is a fine conception. In the concluding lines, the returning sounds of seas, knees, and ease, have a pretty effect on the ear.

† The two last lines of the first stanza end with "prayer" and "ease," and the two first of the second end with "prays" and "ease" (Hibernice), "wise," which is beautiful in the extreme. The idea of putting up "ease" to auction, and making Lord Clive an unsuccessful bidder, is certainly original; it is grand, sublime.

Can keep, my friend, aloof
Fear, that attacks the mind by fits,
And care that like a raven flits
Around the lordly roof.*

O well is he, to whom kind heaven
A decent competence has given,
Rich in the blessing sent;
He grasps not anxiously for more,
Dreads not to use his little store,
And fattens on content.

O well is he! for life is lost,
Amid a whirl of passions tost;

* The liveried troops here mentioned, mean living servants, and not fencible regiments. The "Great" mean all titled and rich men in general, which brings to mind a couplet written by a lady—

"I have no desire to reflect on the state,
But little Lord Montford is one of the GREAT."

The happy mode of expression, "Can keep, my friend, aloof fear!" is charmingly melodious, and the representing the raven *flitting* about the lordly roof like a bat is new, and beyond all praise. Surely Gray should have written—

"Far, far aloof the *bat* affrighted sails."

Such appropriation of non-appertaining properties gives an exquisite beauty to poetry.

Then why, dear Jack, should man,
Magnanimous ephemera! stretch
His views beyond the narrow reach
Of his contracted span? *

Why should he from his country run,
In hopes beneath a foreign sun
Serener hours to find?
Was never man in this wild chase?
Who changed his nature with his place,
And left himself behind.†

For winged with all the lightning's speed
Care climbs the bark, care mounts the steed,‡
An inmate of the breast;
Nor Barca's heat, nor Zembla's cold,
Can drive from that pernicious hold,
The too tenacious guest.

They whom no anxious thoughts annoy,
Grateful the present hours enjoy,
Nor seek the next to know;
To lighten every ill they strive,§
Nor, ere Misfortune's hand arrive,
Anticipate the blow.‖

* The idea of the magnanimous ephemera stretching his "views" beyond the narrow reach of his "span," is worthy of Homer.

† A chase to find serene hours is very well hit off indeed; common sportsmen find their game first and chase it afterwards, but here the chase is to find.

‡ An inmate of the breast mounting a steed!

§ Those who are not annoyed by any ills strive to lighten them!

‖ That a blow should necessarily follow the arriv

Something must ever be amiss,
Man has his joys, but perfect bliss
  Lives only in the brain;
We cannot all have all we want,
And chance unasked to this may grant
  What that has begged in vain.

Wolf rush'd on death in manhood's bloom,
Paulet crept slowly to the tomb;
  Here breath, there fame was given,*
And that wise power who weighs our lives
By contras and by pers contrives †
  To make the balance even.

To thee she gave two piercing eyes,‡
A body, just of Tydeus' size,
  A judgment sound and clear,
A mind with various science fraught,§
A liberal soul, a threadbare coat,
  And forty pounds a year.

To me, one eye, not over good,
Two sides that to their cost have stood,‖

a hand, few persons would anticipate. "A word and a blow" we have heard of; this passage, therefore, denotes genius!

* Breath here means length of days, which has the recommendation of novelty. Fame, instead, of breath, is a grand conception.

† This is surely one of the finest lines in the English language.

‡ How prettily complimentary to his friend!

§ "Fraught" and "coat" are allowable rhymes.

‖ Stood, here means withstood; for two sides "standing" a cough, might otherwise be deemed harsh.

A ten years' hectic cough:
Aches, stitches, all the numerous ills *
That swell the devilish doctors' bills,
And sweep poor mortals off.

A coat more bare than thine, a soul
That spurns the crowd's malign control,
A fixed contempt of wrong,
Spirits above affliction's power,
And still to charm the lonely hour
With NO INGLORIOUS SONG!" †

The self-conceit of Gifford before he became the wielder of the Quarterly tomahawk, and the dread of writers not of the party he supported, was a constant theme of periodical publications in that day,—not, indeed, for his attachment to the betting-stand, but as a man raised from obscurity by individual kindness, and then, as narrow minds always incline, directed to exalt

* It has generally been supposed that the medicines taken swell the doctors' bills, but it is here evident they are swollen by diseases.

† The author's description of himself elucidates his own character in the happiest and most fortunate manner. Everybody must surely respect and honour a man who gives it under his own hand, that his soul spurns the *malign control* of the crowd, that he has a fixed contempt for everything wrong, that his cheerfulness can subdue affliction, and that he can sing like a nightingale to charm the lonely hour. This, it must be acknowledged, is, indeed, a *glorious song*.

his own importance at the cost of minds far higher than his own in genius, and less, infinitely less, tortuous in conduct.

The fair Arabella, rendered inconsolable by the loss of a favourite dog which had gone mad, determines, perhaps in the way of consolation, to set out on a pilgrimage of love, in order, if possible, to find Henry Lambert. She dresses herself in a green Joseph, made for her grandmother, and tying on a small straw hat, having a shepherd's crook in her hand and her pocket full of turnips for her sustenance, goes forth, as all lady loves in that day might be supposed to do, if they could feel the real passion. In this garb, exposed to the night air, she got a swelled face, but did not the less listen to the nightingale whose notes "floated sweetly on the balmy zephyr to soothe her ravished ear." In this pleasant situation, reclining under an aged oak on a bank of violets, something passes by like a spirit. It was her Henry, who, seizing the enchanting Arabella by the hair, exclaimed, "O matchless effervescence of human happiness, divine empress of my soul, I have languished for ages to behold thee,—I have been burned up and consumed by the unquenchable fire of exhaustless passion. Every moment that passed seemed to me the duration

of a century. The sports of the field were vain in thy absence. I seemed like a forsaken doe on the banks of the Tigris. The golden glory of the sun when darting his meridian splendour on the sycamore shade, had no solace for my distracted heart. In sleep, the dainty visions of thy loveliness played on my secluded senses, and irritated my hopes to the madness of despair. There was no music in the murmuring of the silver rivulet that bubbled through the flowery brake; the pale moon glared on me with the dimness of death. O queen of all my wishes! O incomparable Arabella! O thou most beautiful of the human race, what will become of me, if your frowns fall upon me! One kiss from thy sweet lips would raise me to a height of joy that the proudest earthly potentate never yet experienced in his gilded palace, or his outrageous ministers in the vile plunderings of his official power. Wilt thou be mine? wilt thou become myself, the chief portion of my being, the light of my eyes, the rapture of my soul? I will hug thee to my heart till it burst with ecstacy; I will play with the tangles of thy hair till faintness overshadows me."

To the foregoing elegant rhapsody the divine Arabella replied,—she had nearly eat up all her turnips, and therefore looked at him with com-

manding sweetness,—"To be the object of the adoration of such a mind as thine is, my Henry, of itself sufficient to raise the most humble to the pinnacle of human greatness! The tone of thy melodious voice falls on my nerves like the calm operation of opium on the wretch in pain. Sweet Henry, gentle shepherd, pretty youth, fine gentleman! I will, I will be thy wife, immediately. Let no time intervene till we are ONE. I have waited a long while, and began almost to be out of patience, therefore let us lose no more time. Had we been married on our first acquaintance, at this period we might have been the parents of two girls and a boy—I am sure we might—here is my hand—take it and welcome."

The lovers now returned to Arabella's home. All the neighourhood heard of the intended match. Dr. Dedrick procured the licence, the parish clerk bought a new ring for the occasion, and Sir Timothy Rattlesnake did himself the honour of giving the lady away. The evening of this arrangement was passed in mutual endearments, and they had roast fowl, eggs, and spinach for supper. He drank three pints of port, and the lovely Arabella some gin and water, dancing, singing, and romping till midnight.

The next day they were married; during the

service, there was nothing remarkable except that Henry was disconcerted and his eyes moistened, when an officious farmer's man softly stepped up and whispered him "that he had found a hare sitting." The wedding dinner was elegant, and the officers of all the militia regiments round were invited. The bride, at the earnest request of a Captain Malmsbury, sang a song penetrating to the hearts of her audience, from whom it received the most rapturous applause, as the acme of melody and poetic inspiration.

"Ah, well a-day!
It is not now the month of May,
Yet let us all be gay,—
Ah, well a-day!

Yes, we will sing
The praise of every living thing,
And for each other we will bring
The flowers of spring.

Ah, well a-day!
I must not sport with virgin play—
I'm married, as they say—
Ah, well a-day!"

At the end of six months Arabella presented her husband with a lovely boy, thus consolidating their affections. The child grew fatter every day, notwithstanding, during the first year it had

the jaundice, measles, small-pox, whooping-cough, chicken-pox, nervous fever, rickets, mumps, and pleurisy.

One day, Henry being gone to London on business for more than three weeks, Arabella wandered to an adjacent grove, and had seated herself alone under a sweetbriar, when she all at once heard the trampling of horses. Could it be her dear Henry? But no, he could not yet leave London. Who was it but one of her old lovers, Mr. Peter Perkins, who, seeing her, flew to the romantic spot. He fell on his knees, and she fainted in his arms. "O, my Arabella," said he. "O, Mr. Perkins, how could you surprise me so!" said she. Then a tender conversation ensued. Mr. Perkins was ignorant of Arabella's marriage; and, in her fond recollections of the past, during two hours that the interview lasted, her revived affection prevented her once alluding to the fact. Love absorbs all other considerations. Mr. Perkins stated he should see her again soon, as he was upon a visit to a friend in the neighbourhood. The moon was beginning to rise in clouded majesty when they separated. As she entered, she found her present situation banish every pleasant reflection:—

"Why did I not think of this before? Why

did I indulge a softness that must be suppressed? Ah! tyrant love! Those who sincerely feel thy power, too often sacrifice every other consideration to thy all-ruling sway!"

Arabella was a discreet lady; and, therefore, wrote Henry a full account of the meeting; and, at the same time, she wrote Mr. Peter Perkins that "as she was now married, she could never desire to see his face again."

An accident happens to her child when he has reached his fourth year, just as his parents were going to celebrate his birthday. He was recovered about the time that Mrs. Lambert gave birth to another son; and, three days afterwards, became "as well as could be expected."

A Mrs. Mandrake is now introduced, who, admiring Arabella's beauty, recollects herself, and adds, "Poor thing! She was a reputed orphan, but she has thought proper to marry a gentleman, forsooth!"

Arabella is somewhat of a Blue; and, while eating a buttered crumpet, teaches Euclid to her child at the same time. She learns from a friend who enters suddenly, exclaiming that a Mr. Ireland had found a trunk-full of MSS. of Shakspeare, wonderful revelations to literary people, and nearly faints. She is so delighted and moved at the intelligence. "One of the

easiest things in the world is to begin a novel —the difficulty is how to proceed to the conclusion." The author abruply exclaims, "There is the plague how to get rid of your characters with decency." Some may be married, some killed, but there was still much skill and labour required to manage it, even in novels, after the truly modern fashion of being without plots at all. Henry Lambert had preferred living in Arabella's cottage because it was snug and half-buried in honeysuckles. This is said to secure him from the charge of meanness, because he had a fine house and establishment in Gloucestershire, equal to that of George Rose, then a great political dependent on the minister of the hour. The Mrs. Mandrake before alluded to had a couple of daughters about thirteen years of age, so very undersized their mother took advantage of it, when she was on the wane, by dressing them in white, keeping them in the nursery, and calling them "the children." She would have fainted had they called her mother. She pretended to charity, and to patronise a pretty Welsh girl, but it was only to have a dependent at her beck, or

To keep a girl to fret upon.

Her charitable actions did not originate in cha-

ritable motives. Even her husband dared not show his affection for his daughters before their mother. Henry Lambert having discussed the characters of this family to his wife, ordered his curricle to proceed to a bull-baiting, being a Windhamite of that time, Mr. Windham being the advocate of all the blackguard sports of the day.

In the interim, Farmer Green's cow broke into Arabella's garden, and ate up the cabbages. Mr. Peter Perkins offered her consolation. She had sent her servant to ascertain the extent of the depredations. Mr. Perkins kissed her hand with fervour. "O, Mr. Perkins," she said, "urge me no further. I scarce dare think on the subject; but, should the melancholy event you allude to ever take place, which may heaven avert, I know not any person who possesses so large a portion of my esteem as Mr. Peter Perkins."

He now kissed Arabella, called her his future bride, his good genius, his protecting angel. Henry's voice was now heard in the hall, which moderated his transports. As Henry entered, he said, "I wish Farmer Green would take better care of his cow." There was a comicality in the allusion, which caused a general laugh; and Henry, shaking Mr. Perkins by the hand, said he was heartily glad to see him—"any news?"

"None," said Mr. Peter Perkins, with somewhat of an embarrassed air. "None upon earth, none at all that I hear of. The cow, I find, has done a deal of mischief. Had you much sport at the bull-baiting? Was Parson Chestnut there?" Mr. Perkins then took leave.

Arabella threw her arms round Henry's neck, and "welcomed him home with that winning tenderness which artifice can never feign." After dinner she took her harp; and, gazing upon her husband with fond delight, sung:—

"When you are absent all look drear'ly,
When you are absent I am sad,
Because I love my Henry dearly,
When he is with me I am glad.

O then, unless you wish to grieve me,
No more desert my circling arms;
It breaks my heart that you should leave me,
The lord, the master of my charms."

So enraptured was Henry at this extemporary proof of Arabella's regard, that he jumped from his chair, played a thousand antics, rolled the children on the floor, drank a bottle of burgundy, and sung, "God save the King."

When they had lived some time thus happily at the cottage, Henry proposed going to London, to his house in Grosvenor Square, to live suit-

ably to their rank and fortune. The house was got ready, and all things placed on a most expensive footing. Soon their domicile became the resort of fashion; both husband and wife got fond of play. The children were educated with the utmost refinement and most salutary delicacy, under Dr. Grampus, their tutor; who, by not restraining them in any of their desires, became a favourite of their own as well as of their parents.

Arabella's beauty was much admired by Lord Kissville; but no one could throw the slightest imputation on her character. Mr. Peter Perkins frequented her assemblies, "sighing like furnace," but from his want of acquaintance with town manners, he soon became contemptible in her eyes, and cut the intimacy; "execrating, in the bitterness of his heart, the follies and vices of the aristocracy."

Arabella got acquainted in turn with Lady Maria Jones, advanced in life, whose husband had deceived her, and who was famous for proving her story over and over again. At her twice-told tale one day, Henry Lambert came bursting into the room to say that his relation, the Earl of Frolicsfun was dead; and as he was successor to the title, he was become "My Lord," and Arabella, "Your Ladyship." Persons of dis-

tinction filled their house for some weeks, to pay compliments. The couple were pronounced remarkably "affable," while at the same time they knew how to support their "dignity" with propriety! The newspapers, to appear familiar with fashion, announced that the Right Hon. the Earl of Frolicsfun, Baron Laughable, had died without issue, and that in consequence the Earldom was extinct, but the Barony of Laughable had descended to Henry Lambert, Esq., in right of his mother. The couple, the season of mourning being over, were most graciously received at St. James'. In conclusion:

"Lord and Lady Laughable continued to live together many years, tasting even greater happiness in each other, from the contrast which they had formerly experienced, esteemed and beloved by all who knew them, and dealing out blessings all around them; and when death at last called them to regions of eternal bliss, they left behind them in their children, faithful representatives of their virtue and felicity," to use the hacknied phrases of the papers—So ends the tale.

The last volume closes with "an humble address to the "doers" of that excellent and impartial Review, called "The British Critic." It commences:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen, as I am well assured

that your invaluable criticisms on the various literary productions of the present day, proceed from the joint labours of many ingenious men and respectable old women; so I feel myself deeply interested in your decision on the merits of the foregoing work. It is therefore my most ardent wish to deprecate your vengeance: it is my most anxious hope to obtain your praise.

'O do not break a fly upon a wheel.'

"But surely I shall not be deemed too vain, or unpardonably presumptuous when I express a lively confidence of your approbation of this my first essay as a novelist. I am certain I have spared no pains in the composition; and I have carefully avoided all those allusions and remarks which might tend to produce an overflow of your bile, or excite your laudable indignation. As I well know your noble natures never can forgive those scandalous sentiments of absolute liberty, which our ridiculous ancestors were so eager to disseminate, but which all moderate, honourable, and enlightened persons now hold in just execration and contempt; so my principal care has been to keep clear of all such subjects as could give the slightest umbrage to your ingenious minds, and extensive understandings. You also

may conclude, that as far as silence gives consent, I perfectly approve of the two restraining bills which have lately passed into laws; that I am a decided enemy to all improvement in political science, and wish to hear in the course of the ensuing campaign, that the British grenadiers shall have marched triumphantly into Paris.

" But to return to my novel—I will be bold to say, that there is great precision, and a pure moral tendency throughout the whole, with so inviolate a consistency of character, that I think I may challenge a fair comparison with any of my most celebrated competitors in the same line. The story you will allow to be plain, simple, interesting, well connected, and full of pathos: and I doubt not but you will think it worthy of your generous protection; nay, I even trust that the wisest, best, and most patient associators of the immaculate Mr. Reeves,* will be inclined to support its loyalty, and promote its circulation. Besides, as I have had the honour to inform you that it is the offspring of a female pen, I can

* The Rev. Robert, afterwards Archdeacon, Nares, who was a violent Tory. He edited the British Critic. Beckford called him " Nastilo," from " Nares," a nose: as Beckford reverenced Lord Chatham, so he deprecated the political conduct of his son, no matter for their intimacy in youth.

rely with perfect satisfaction on the acknowledged gallantry of your gentlemen, and the tender sympathy of your ladies—indeed the more so, as I have the good fortune to be personally known to several very valuable members of your illustrious body, from whom I have already received many striking proofs of justice, liberality, and good will towards me.

" Being convinced that you possess the most exquisitely refined taste in poetry, I have been particularly attentive to this article, which I trust will be deemed of prime quality, calculated for general benefit and immediate use ; such as will neither clog your stomachs nor produce that nausea to which you are subject, upon taking any quantity of pungent, strong, or stimulating rhymes.

" If it should appear that I have borrowed a sentence or a thought from some of our most admired modern writers, I trust you will graciously forgive so venial an offence, as I am ready to affirm that any passages I may thus have selected and transplanted, which shew to disadvantage in their new situations, were not inserted with a design of depreciating their excellence, but merely to display that happy intricacy of style and sentiment without which no novel can have a just claim to your notice and approba-

tion. With all humility, therefore, I am free to assert, that some of those extracts which unfortunately in my little work may seem ludicrous and absurd, possess great beauty and propriety as connected with their original composition. If you should suppose that I have wished to excite a laugh at the expense of their respective authors, your high mightinesses are mistaken; my sole intention having been, by a happy mixture of discordant parts, to produce a pleasing regularity with a lively and captivating variety.

> 'Thus from dissensions discords rise,
> And beauties from deformities,
> And happiness from woe.'

"I dare say your imperial majesties will pronounce this quotation to be inapplicable; but if you should, I can only say that you do not comprehend me, and are not as clear-sighted as you ought to be, and as hitherto I have always been inclined to think you.

"Do me the favour to erect your magnificent ears with attention, while I recite to you a fable that will fascinate you:—

"A screech owl, an ass, a peacock, and a boar, formed themselves into a critical junto to decide upon the harmony of the groves, and the modulations of the forest. The roaring of the lion was

voted *nem. con.* to be bombast; the neighing of the horse to be vapid and jejune; the song of the nightingale, miserable affectation; and the notes of the linnet, the goldfinch, and the lark, namby-pamby nonsense. In short, they unanimously agreed that (not including themselves) no living creature possessed any genius, musical powers, or natural melody, but the mule; his voice and abilities, therefore, they candidly acknowledged to be excellent. These four animals now endeavoured to convince all the beasts and birds that their decision was a just one, and that in consequence the mule ought to be the hero of the day.

"With your permission, 'most potent, grave, and reverend Signors!' I will defer the moral and the application to some future opportunity.

"But to lay aside all levity, it is impossible to deny that you waste your midnight oil to save the present race from the horrors of licentiousness and the encroachments of philosophy; and when it is considered that—

> 'The evil which men do, lives after them;
> The good oft lies interred with their bones.'

your disinterestedness must be most striking, for posterity, perhaps, may not pay to the pious memories of you or your employers those honours which you have so assiduously struggled to de-

serve. You will, however, during your lives, find sufficient consolation in the idea, that you have supported, to the best of your abilities, the good cause of GENERAL RESTRAINT, and that you have laboured in your vocation with unabated ardour. If, indeed, the reflections of the fallen Adam should occasionally cross your minds, who, on contemplating the miseries he had prepared for his descendants, exclaimed—

> 'Who of all ages to succeed, but feeling
> The evil on him brought by me, shall curse
> My head, ill fare our ancestor impure,
> For this we may thank Adam;'

yet the proper sense of the immediate good enjoyed must stifle every sensation of remorse, while you rank in public opinion with the Pitts, the Wyndhams, the Dundases, the Grenvilles, and the Reeves' of the day.

"Go on then, great and generous arbitrators of the national taste! in your glorious and splendid career;—direct the thunderbolts of your rage at the head of those infamous and audacious libellers, who degrade literature by their free discussions and philosophical remonstrances, and who even insult religion by their pernicious doctrine of toleration. Be it yours 'to stand in the gap' between error and truth—between vice

and virtue—be it yours to shake the flaming scourge, and to chastise those literary monsters who dare to push their researches beyond the sacred line of demarcation you have drawn.

" To your virtues, liberality, and candour, the whole nation can bear testimony; for I defy the most impudent of your detractors to show a single instance amongst all your writings where you have spoken favourably of any work that was base enough to vindicate the hoggish herd of the people, that was mean enough to object to any measure of the present wise and incorruptible administration, or that was cowardly enough to censure the 'just and necessary war' in which the nation is now so fortunately engaged. No, ye worthy magistrates of the mind, you have exerted your civil jurisdiction with meritorious perseverance, and if at any time you have stepped forth as warriors to defend the exclusive privileges of the few against the vulgar attacks of the many, your demeanour has been truly gallant, you have thrown your lances with a grace becoming the most renowned knights of chivalry, and have hurled your anathemas at the murmuring multitude with a dignified fury that would have done honour to Peter the Hermit, or to the chief of the most holy Inquisition.

" Owing to your animated exertions, and the

vigorous measures of your patrons, 'you may soon hope to see the happy inhabitants of this prosperous island express but one opinion,' and act with one accord, the rich and the powerful shall be tranquilly triumphant, the low and wretched patiently submissive; the great man shall eat white bread in peace, and the poor feed on barley cakes in silence. Every person in the kingdom shall acknowledge the blessings of a strong regular government; while the absurd doctrine of the rights of man, shall be no more thought of or respected than the rights of horses, asses, dogs, and dromedaries.

"That your enemies may speedily be cast into dungeons, or sent to Botany Bay, and that yourselves may become placemen, pensioners, peeresses, loan-mongers, bishops, and contractors, is the constant wish and earnest prayer of,

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"Your devoted, humble servant,

"HARRIET MARLOW."

CHAPTER VI.

POLITICAL PREDILECTIONS—ANECDOTE OF A VISITOR —FONTHILL GROUNDS—BEAUTIES OF THE GARDENS —NOTES IN BOOKS—REMOVAL TO BATH—SALE OF FONTHILL—IMPROVEMENTS AT LANSDOWN.

It will be perceived on which side at that time the political feelings of Mr. Beckford inclined, from the burlesque novel just noticed. Mr. Pitt, his youthful compeer, had shewn how cheaply he held the principles of his father; and his own repeated avowals compared to his ambition for place, and with what ease he could shake off the professions with which he acquired his extensive popularity at the commencement of his political career; his junction with a party in support of parliamentary reform after the example of his father, and his efforts afterwards to bring those who advocated it to the

scaffold, are upon record. The politics of Mr. Beckford were those of his father, and to the last leant to the popular side, by which must not be understood "radicalism," as it is at present styled, for that name and the party connected with it were then unknown, but rather whiggism as it was called, on which the liberal politics of the present day are grounded. It was not easy to draw from Mr. Beckford his political creed. Those who introduced the subject he often sent away with the idea that he was a staunch tory. It was not until the conversation turned upon old things and old political men and times, that he would discourse upon politics, and shew that he was decidedly opposed to the ministers and measures of the latter part of the reign of George III. He had a very mean opinion of that monarch, and used to relate some curious anecdotes which he had heard when he was about the court in his youth. "Let us go to court to-day," said one of his father's old friends to him in 1780, "we shall be accused of thinking too well of the rioters if we do not." Beckford went accordingly, in company with some of the Effingham family; the Earl of that name had married his father's sister. The Countess of Effingham having become a widow, married a second time, Field Marshal

Sir George Howard, K.B. This officer was with young Beckford, and just as they entered the apartment where the levee was held, the king came from his closet, and seeing Sir George, who had commanded some of the troops that fired upon the rioters in the city, said to him in his hurried manner, "Ah, Howard, glad to see you—peppered them well, I hope—peppered them well!" This remark was thought coarse, as many persons were killed and wounded—it was so out of place, that it was almost a question whether the act was legal, and in any case not a thing to be spoken lightly of by the sovereign, in the hearing of so many persons. Sir George felt it, and gravely replied, "I trust your majesty's troops will always do their duty."

Mr. Beckford related some anecdotes of the king to Mr. Cyrus Redding, too coarse to put in print.* He described him much as Lord Waldegrave has done, except adding that he possessed a species of low cunning and little sincerity, and was utterly destitute of feeling. His attachment to his youngest daughter affected him more because his mind was not in the right tone at her death, than it would have done had he been in full health. He hated the Prince of Wales, but it was a Brunswick failing to have

* In his recorded conversation.

a distaste for a successor. The stories told of the royal niggardlinesses were for the most part true, nor had Lord Chatham wrongfully accused the king of duplicity, it was a part of his natural character, though some charged it upon his education by his mother.

Thus allusions in the novel just cited, display the side Mr. Beckford took in politics, and how averse he was to Mr. Pitt and his measures. The Mr. Reeves to whom he alludes, the over-officious tool of the court, was continually over-acting his part. His name will be frequently met with in the journals, between 1790 and 1800. He first endeavoured to distinguish himself by calling meetings to put down what he called republican principles—in other words, those of Mr. Fox and his friends, and was tried for a libel owing to his over zeal. He declared openly, that if parliaments were destroyed, the king would remain, insinuating he was all-sufficient. George Rose, like Reeves, now nearly forgotten, was originally a purser in the navy, who, by his assiduity in serving his patrons through thick and thin, got into parliament and place. His abilities went no further than that indulgent friends paid him the compliment of supposing he wrote a pamphlet on the Irish trade in 1783, which he did not write, and

some worthless pamphlets, of which he was really the author. He was the butt of the opposition writers of his day, and, like Pybus and Dundas, an intimate friend of the minister of the hour.

Both the burlesque novels of Mr. Beckford were written at Fonthill before the decease of his mother in 1798. It has been stated that he went abroad upon that event, and upon his return led a retired life, but not an inactive one, at Fonthill. He superintended the works at the Abbey in person, to which he afterwards added the later or Eastern part, which was never completely finished. The retired life he thus led awoke public curiosity in a remarkable degree. The most exaggerated statements were put forth regarding his mode of life, which was represented as extravagant and epicurean in the highest degree, when it was simple and refined, and no more. Persons disguised themselves as workmen to spy what was going on there. In one case a story was circulated that some one had clambered over the boundary wall, mistaken the master for the gardener, was shewn the grounds, and was then ordered to get out in the same way as he had got in. This was a misstatement. Mr. Beckford himself related the circumstances very differently. He said

that by shutting out strangers and persons who came to indulge an idle curiosity, he had excited it. It was not pleasant to be looked in the face by intrusive people who have no sense of delicacy in trespassing anywhere that it suits their fancy, as if it were a right. Strangers, on making a proper application at a convenient time, were not refused admittance, but idlers most assuredly were. "I was coming out of the hall one day going on foot to my plantations, when a stranger addressed me:—

"'Can I see Fonthill?'

"'The house is not shewn.'

"'Might I not be permitted to see the gardens and grounds?'

"There was something pleasing and gentlemanly in the stranger's address, and when he added, 'you could shew them, I dare say?' I thought I would shew them, following out the joke. I led him to the gardens, and exhibited the grounds to him, and then brought him round to the Abbey. Here I suspect he began to mistrust that I was not the kind of cicerone he at first took me to be, or that I pretended I was. I thought him one of the pleasantest men with whom I had ever conversed, deeply read, sensible, and perfectly well bred. When I had led him through one or two of the principal

apartments, the dinner was serving up. I begged him to walk with me into another room he had not seen, and led him at once to the dining table, telling him of his mistake in my regard, and requesting him to be seated. I would not be denied. I had no doubt he felt the call of appetite after a fatiguing walk. We conversed on a variety of subjects, and he was at home on all. When he rose to go away, I called for a servant as it was dark, thanking him for his society, and asking him if he had any conveyance. He only requested to be shewn the way to the Park Gate. Thus we parted, and I never saw him more, nor have I any knowledge who he was. As to my treating one of the most agreeable men I ever knew with rudeness, one who had eaten my salt, it was impossible: I hope I am a gentleman."

Year after year passed away with Mr. Beckford in realizing the ideas of a fertile imagination, amid the splendid scenery around him. His life was now uniform and without incident to record down to 1821. Deeply imbued with the love of literature, a highly poetic fancy, master of four or five modern languages, and their different dialects, a deep student of ancient lore, and fond of painting, botany, planting, and the liberal arts in general, he divided his time amid

the inexhaustible resources of an accomplished mind, in the midst of treasures of nature and art. Thus devoted, his imagination took a flight far above the common-place level, and imbibed a distaste for every-day things. But he had seen much of the world, and knew how to estimate it. The *mauvaise honte* of his youth continued in some degree in later life. He devoted a considerable portion of every day to reading, and formed a judgment of almost every new book worth perusal which came from the press. Music was a continual resource, he was an adept at improvisation on the piano. A month or two once or twice in the year spent in London, thus kept up his knowledge of the progress of the art. It could not be said of him that with the princely fortune he possessed, he wasted it at the racing stand or in other vile pursuits.

Little had been said by the public about any part of Fonthill but the buildings, yet were the beautiful grounds there nurtured by his taste as superior to the gardens of Versailles as St. James's is inferior to the French palace of that name. The grounds were marvellously fine, no expense being spared in keeping them. They covered nineteen hundred acres within the wall, with three thousand more around it. Nor was the

expense blameable, for the reduction of his fortune by the depression of West India property, and the result of one of those lottery decisions, called Chancery suits, he could not foresee, nor that the means did not remain to him to spend thirty thousand per annum to the last within the noble building which he had reared, and in the midst of treasures of literature and art; for he stated it would still cost him that sum to reside at the abbey.

It cannot but excite painful and melancholy reflections on the tenure by which men hold the goods of this life. Those who were acquainted with his circumstances, thought him so secured in the enjoyment of a princely income, that he was absolutely beyond the reach of fortune. He at one time was in the actual receipt of one hundred and ten thousand pounds a year. It cannot be said of him that he wasted his inheritance at the gaming table. The palace, which he raised on a barren mountain, the greater part of those vast plantations which surround it, the collection of books, and of rare works of art, and the superb furniture, which give such peculiar dignity and splendour to the interior of his residence, speak at once the immensity of his means, and attest the propriety and gracefulness of their application. To him, who, whatever

was uttered to the contrary, seems really to have devoted his whole nerve to the business of making the abbey realise the most fascinating visions of a noble imagination, such a frustration of all his hopes, in the evening of his life, must have been poignant beyond the common intensity of human feelings. The abbey was the only enjoyment he had in this world. There he saw the years and seasons succeed each other, feeding his fancy amid the splendid and romantic solitude around him. Imbued with the spirit of elegant literature, gifted with poetic inspirations far beyond those which have raised many modern names to celebrity, a perfect master of most living languages, and not unskilled in the lore of antiquity, passionately fond of music, painting, and the liberal arts, he divided his hours amongst the various elegant employments which his accomplished mind, his uninterrupted seclusion, and his inexhaustible resources must have rendered transcendently delightful, it is not to be wondered at, though it may be a subject of regret, if such circumstances nurtured in his thoughts a tone somewhat above the common-place ideas of mankind, and gave him a distaste for any enjoyment which lay beyond the precincts of his monastery.*

* Note made at Fonthill, 1823.

Money to him was the means, not the end. A writer said, speaking of the grounds at Fonthill, when they were in their glory, about the time when their owner was about to quit them for ever—"In these beautiful grounds, the only ambition of art was to follow nature. Here no absurd artifices reminded of the geometrical gardener, with his compasses and his diagram, binding and torturing native charms in one chain of ostentatious formality. Nature had not here by barbarous refinement been dislocated; she did not appear tight-laced and in a hoop petticoat, without the merit of simplicity, or the fascination of elegance. In the grounds of Fonthill all beauty was cultivated on so just a principle, that it seemed the spontaneous effect of natural fertility. From the lighter sprinkling of verdure, to the deepest gloom of impervious foliage, all partook of the freedom of untrained production, and whether 'by hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade,' the votary of nature felt himself under the influence of her acknowledged supremacy. The diversity of situation and circumstance were also great. Here were extent, repose, and majesty for the pencil of Claude; the rugged grandeur that would attract Ruysdael, and the deep and savage wildness which suited the genius of Salvator.

Here might Collins indulge in the dream of fanciful enchantment, Gray soar upon the eagle wing of an ardent ambition, and Thomson 'lie at large, and sing the glories of the circling year.' Though such the character of the grounds, they did not seem to be known to the visitors, farther than they were compelled to become acquainted with them in their drive to the abbey. The latter was the great object of attention. There was the shrine of their idolatry, and for one person who would penetrate the romantic recesses of the woods, there were a hundred who expressed an exclusive anxiety with respect to the old china. A great number of the latter class of *virtuosi* had indeed been converted to an admiration of the books, but that was merely on the score of their exquisite binding, and in this respect they saw many old friends with new faces, so new and so handsome, that if Plato, or Tully, or Virgil came on earth again, they could hardly be made to believe that their philosophy, eloquence, or poetry, which they sent into the world so unadorned, could be so arrayed in purple and gold as to gain more converts by their outward glory than by the divine spirit that animated them."

The public taste has certainly not been much amended since that time, the period when the

owner of Fonthill, having balanced between taking up his residence in a small house on the estate, and living on four or five thousand a year or parting with it—he at last determined to sell the whole, and abandon the spot where he had expended so much money and labour, and spent so large a portion of his life. He had still ample means to meet his liberal expenditure, and something over to devote to those pursuits and amusements which were his solace. The two or three men of superior mind that made part of his establishment and companionship, as Dr. Errhart and the Abbé Maquin, had died under his roof, as well as Franchi the musician, and superintendent of his household.

It was in 1823 that its owner resolved to sell the abbey and the estate. The public curiosity to see the interior of the building of which so much had been said was insatiable. There was a catalogue published of those things which were not reserved by the owner for his new residence, and no less than ten thousand copies were sold at a large price.

An individual who visited the abbey before it was dilapidated, described the impression the edifice made upon his mind in the following language. It only does it justice. "To give

you some idea of the place, you must think of York Minster, but not surrounded with its villainous neighbourhood of shabby houses and tile roofs, but placed on a commanding elevation, in the midst of a wood-land paradise of many miles in extent. Ridiculous, you say, to compare a gentleman's house to the grandest cathedral in England—not so ridiculous as you may suppose. What would you think, for instance, of a room, in which might nearly be placed the monument at London Bridge; yet this, with the exception of a very few feet, is really possible in the saloon here, and although at this spot the interior of Fonthill Tower has not the vastness of York Minster, yet I think the whole building stands on more ground. The dazzling effect of the stained glass in the lofty windows, when the sun throws their colours on the crimson carpet, contrasted with the vivid green lawn which you see at the same glance, in the distance, through the lofty entrance doors, themselves as high as a moderate-sized house; the galleries, one hundred feet above you, leading to the nunneries, the magnificent mirror at the end of the room, opposite the entrance door, reflecting the prospect of the grounds for miles, altogether presented a scene I shall not soon see equalled, and could not help wondering how it came there

—it reminded me of Aladdin's palace. Still standing in the same place, look right and left, and you have a clear view of three hundred and thirty feet, as great a distance as you can see at once in Westminster Abbey; not bare stone walls, pillars, and arches, but a magnificent apartment, furnished with valuable books, cabinets, paintings, mirrors, crimson silk hangings, and a thousand things besides; you walk the whole distance on superb carpets, and at every step you take your attention is arrested by some beautiful work of art or natural curiosity. I would defy any man, however sober or taciturn his habits, to proceed from one end to the other of this sumptuous gallery without uttering some exclamation of admiration; for whatever may be the hobby he is in the habit of riding, he is sure to find something in his own way, the variety is so infinite.

"This is but a small part of what the wandering spectator has to see; all the rooms claim exclusive attention, you feel pain at leaving an object before you have half examined its beauties, till something fresh surprises and delights you. You are bewildered with admiration—your self-love is gratified by discovering that it was not your fault that you found little to admire in the many show places you have seen, for here you

find at last things up to your own standard, and even going beyond it. A man of exquisite taste, boundless wealth, and lofty genius, has evidently been devoting his life here, and has produced a thing on the whole unrivalled.

"How I have regretted, on going over the superb palaces on the Continent, that the King of England should have nothing like them; but here is a palace ready made, and worthy of a King. All that is awful in the Cathedral, all that is magnificent in the modern style of architecture, all that is superb in fitting up, and most of what you find interesting in various museums, all is concentred in this place.

"R.'s wise observation has occurred to me frequently—that he would not give a pin to see Fonthill, for he could go to the British Museum at any time, and there he should see, free of expense, all that Fonthill is celebrated for. This is the way people judge, and make up their minds, very much to their own satisfaction, no doubt. All the revenge I should inflict on such people would be to bring them to the place, and witness the utter self-annihilation they must exhibit on being brought underneath this magnificent tower.

"It is impossible to describe the shape of the building accurately; but it is pretty much as if

you were to place two buildings like Westminster Abbey across each other, and when you hear that much of the intermediate space formed by such a cross is filled up with various buildings, you may form some idea of its extent. You see the interior of a cathedral at one view, and lose much of its vastness on that account; but this place being divided into innumerable parts, you, of course, examine it in detail, and no memory is sufficient to recollect what you have traversed; your mind is confused with indistinct images of grandeur.

'I went up to the top of the tower—the grand tower I should say, for there are, at least, ten towers, any of which would make an excellent steeple for some of our London churches. The centre tower, which does not look so lofty as it is, standing on so broad a base, is 280 feet high, and has various chambers towards the top, above the ceiling of the saloon, and some very good painted glass decorates the windows. You at last arrive at the top of all; and I was going to tell you how many feet it is across here, but I know by experience that admeasurement by feet, to you, would be mere words without ideas. You know our dining-room—it is a large room—well, you might place two such, end to end, on the top of the tower."

Another individual wrote at that time:—

"What a place this is for a reader of romances! I had comfortable accommodation assigned me in the Lancaster tower—was much vexed to hear it was not haunted—a ghost in such a place, or even a little noise, would have been a thing to brag of—but all was silent as the grave; a profound night's rest and feelings dressed out in their morning's freshness is a much better preparation for a ramble over an interesting place than a long ride or a still more fatiguing walk, on arriving with companions perhaps made cross by the little inconveniences they may have met with by the way. You can have but little notion of the number of fine pictures here—you know the unhappy infidel state of scepticism I have fallen into with regard to the merits of the old masters, but I have received a lesson here that will do me good. I had gone the length of supposing that they did not produce anything equal to some of the first-rate modern works, and you must allow that the greater part of the Raphaels, Rubens, and Rembrandts that one sees everywhere, only cause distress and perplexity in fruitless endeavours to find out the beauties so universally acknowledged: but here you are released from your embarrassment; the pictures are all of the

best masters, and the best of their works. I declare, that one of the rooms here is richer in fine pictures than the whole of the British gallery, Parmegianos and all; many of the *chefs d'œuvre* that have been exhibited at that place are here. You recollect 'The Laughing Boy,' or, as it was there called, a boy showing a trick, by Leonardo de Vinci; that and many others, I recognised as old acquaintances. The pictures of Rubens, and I am disposed to think really Rubens's own, so different from most of the daubs which are called his, in which the women look like kitchen maids, and the naked children like lumps of tallow; I never saw so many good pictures, and so few bad ones collected together, except at two or three places. You have read the life of Benvenuto Cellini, and laughed at his extravagant praises of his own works; after seeing a few of his performances, which stand pre-eminent in this collection of rarities, particularly the cup made for some marriage present, I can quite excuse a little harmless vanity where there was so much real merit. What must you think of the extent of this place, when I tell you that the grandest part of all is uninhabited, the east arm of the cross: this is finished outside, so that the general effect of the building is uninjured, but visitors are not admitted within.

It was intended, I believe, for a chapel or baron's hall. There are none of those naked polished floors, where

'You cannot walk upright for fear of sliding.'

Indeed, one of the wonders of this place is the rich furniture, which, immense as it is, covers every part, and all seems intended for comfort as well as magnificence, which, considering the nature of the building, you could hardly have expected. This reminds me that the views from the windows on every side, through the large plates of glass, are equal to any I ever saw. Dr. Johnson says that few things are better than travelling in an English post-chaise; I think a pony-chaise, and enjoying at your ease, for the first time, the grand and varied scenery of such a park as this, is better; it is upwards of seven miles round, but the whole domain is probably thirteen miles. We rode about for hours, and visited many spots, and saw enough to be convinced that we had only made a beginning towards exploring its beauties. It is all hill and dale, and every now and then you catch a delightful glimpse of the abbey towering from the midst of the trees. The large lake is frequented by wild fowl, and in some places the water is quite darkened by the hanging woods on each

side. It is easy for a man to build a fine house when he has a stone quarry on his own grounds; there are two in this park; the one from which the old house was taken being hollowed out of the rock, supported by rude pillars, and grown grey with time, looks like a natural cavern. There is here a hermitage, with a long subterraneous passage leading to an arched hall. I could willingly pass a week in this delightful park."

Having removed all those articles of *vertu*, paintings, and books which he determined to reserve, and they were the most choice, the sale commenced. Mr. Beckford had selected Bath for his residence, and the articles retained were removed thither with those of his servants whom a more contracted establishment would permit him to keep in his service. The whole was then disposed of to Mr. Farquhar, an individual who had amassed a large fortune in trade, pecuniary accumulation having been the end of his existence, being in this respect the antipode of Mr. Beckford.

Tapestries, painted or stained glass, the tent of Darius in tapestry, worked from a picture of Le Brun, rare cabinets of ebony, and costly japan works, caskets, antique glasses, tables of marble richly inlaid, Oriental vases, robe chests of scented

wood, works by Cellini and Magnus Berg, models after the antique, coffers, one of which had been the property of Madam Pompadour, girandoles, armories, clocks, candelabras, commodes of rich japan, Sevres porcelaine, vases, and cups, fine tables of Oriental alabaster, jewel cabinets of amber, lapis lazuli, and jade, gold boxes with celebrated miniatures, an antique cabinet made for Henry VIII., and another of ebony, which sold for six hundred pounds, onyx cups engraved, and similar articles without end. One grand mosaic table brought two thousand pounds, while the bronze Laocoon, from the original in Paris, brought but seven hundred and seventy-five, such is the general discrimination in England regarding art!

It appeared that the auctioneer introduced articles into the sale which had never been the property of Mr. Beckford, among them some Chinese furniture, which being remarked to him, he replied, "You pay a very ill compliment to my taste to suppose I would furnish my house with such trash—it came from the Phillipine Islands," referring to Gil Blas, and Phillips the auctioneer. Mr. Farquhar became the purchaser of the estate, abbey, and other things for three hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

Before following Mr. Beckford to Bath, it may not be out of place to mention some two or three things in relation to the paintings and books disposed of at the sale. As to the superb furniture, articles of *virtu*, and similar things, their value has no general interest but to the collector and the upholsterer, tasteful as they were.

It has been seen in Mr. Beckford's burlesque novel how slightingly he spoke of Pitt and Dundas, and as well, that, like many individuals then advanced in life and attached to the memory and politics of Lord Chatham, that nobleman, though professing certain strong Whiggish principles, could hardly be denominated a Whig, and as little be esteemed a Tory. The elder Beckford, it has been shown, was a devoted adherent of Lord Chatham, and the son's principles were the same. Neither the younger Pitt nor Fox, but Chatham, was his *beau ideal* of a statesman. Hence, to many, his political principles were supposed to savour of one party at one time, and at another to be quite opposite. This will account for some of his observations in the sequel. As he bought every book likely to interest him, so he marked here and there the passages worthy of note on the fly leaves of the volumes. This was an early practice with him. Some of his remarks were exceedingly

caustic and severe, and much bustle was created at the Fonthill sale by some of these books, which were accidentally disposed of, having his notes. It was supposed they had all been withdrawn, but by some error a few of them remained, and were sold. He treated the antiquary with little ceremony. He expressed contempt for the opinions contained in the works of a certain gentleman of black-letter notoriety. For one of the breed the utmost scorn was shown by the word "puppy" so often repeated, that at last the letter P. stood for the word of contempt alone, and sometimes "P. D.," or "P. A. D. is at it again."

In a work entitled "Sepulchral Monuments in Great Britain, applied to illustrate the History of Families, Habits, Manners, and Arts, at the different periods from the Norman Conquest to the Seventeenth Century," there were pencilled notes and references.

Vol. II. Part I. page 3.—"Bishop Beauchamp left a striking memorial of his skill in architecture, in St. George's Chapel, at Windsor, which Edward the Fourth's successor has preserved and repaired with strict adherence to truth, while Beauchamp's successor has destroyed his chapel at Salisbury, and scattered the ashes of the whole family."

5. "The author avows his abhorrence of that class of Iconoclasts who affect to make war on superstition, for-

getting how much superstition administers to the comfort of the gross of mankind, by impressions which the cold reasonings of philosophy would never convey to the heart."

The Iconoclasts here alluded to are not the image-breakers of the English Puritanical Commonwealth, or any class of religious reformers, but the Revolutionists of France, who excited the author's indignation by despoiling the buried royalty of St. Denis of its heraldic honours, and making the tombs of Bourbon kings as poor as their memories.

7. "A destroying angel now rides triumphant over Salisbury Cathedral."

By this bold figure, at first sight it might be supposed the Church was in danger, and Lucifer had again become the star of the morning. But it is only a personification of the rage for improving ancient ecclesiastical buildings, which often impels modern bishops, deans, chapters, and churchwardens to works of more cruel defacement and ignorant destruction upon national monuments than ever was effected either by the rabble of Jack Cade or the stern soldiers of Cromwell. The author says—"The cathedral is now modelling under the uniform, unvarying idea of a lengthened choir, bearing no proportions to the body of transepts. To this idea

every beautiful specimen of Gothic architecture must give place."

cccxxviii. "More bitter complaints of the dilapidations committed in one of our finest cathedrals."

Vol. II. part II. page 12. "Antiquarian gropings—at the east end (of Edmund, Duke of York's tomb, in Langley church), hid by the wall, may be *felt* old France and England quarterly."

The author, in thus describing the armorial bearings on the tomb of Edmund de Langley, describes all that can be seen, and in the true spirit of the antiquary, gives as positive an account of a coat of arms, that is so placed as to be out of sight, though not beyond the reach of a Mr. Oldbuck's fingers. The Edmund de Langley mentioned here was uncle to Henry IV. He had been one of the commissioners for governing the kingdom during the minority of Richard II.; distinguished himself in Portugal at the head of an army, in support of the claim of his brother, John of Gaunt, to the crown of Castile; created Duke of York 1385; opposed the usurpation of Henry without success; and was father of Richard Earl of Cambridge, who, by his marriage with a sister of the Earl of March, acquired for his issue a right to the crown, which gave rise to the long and bloody con-

tentions between the houses of York and Lancaster.

14. "Catherine Swinford's tomb, full of rubbish—by many high dames and pious ladies she herself was accounted rubbish. The Duke of Gloucester, being a man of stout stomach, misliked his brother's matching so meanly, but the Duke of York bore it well enough."

"The lady called Catherine Swinford was of German parentage and the daughter of a knight at Hainault; she lived in the Duke of Lancaster's family during the lifetime of his two wives, Blanche and Constance. They were afterwards married, and the charity of the times has given her the credit of having prefaced the duties of a wife by performing the office of a concubine. The great ladies alluded to were the Duchess of Gloucester, the Countess of Derby, Arundel, and others, descended of the blood royal, who, greatly disdained that she should be matched with the Duke of Lancaster, and by that means be accounted the second person in the realm, and preferred in room before them, and, therefore, they would not come in any place where she was present, for it would be a shame to them that a woman of so mean a birth, so base, should have such precedence. But old Hollingshed says, with great simplicity, 'that verily the lady herself was a woman of such bringing up and honourable demeanour, that envy itself could not, in her, but give place to well-deserving.'"

13. "William of Wykeham's buildings at Queenborough are levelled with the ground. The principal gate of his castle at Windsor withstood an injudicious levelling; his cathedral remains unblemished by modern taste."

It is of this celebrated man that Walsingham

says, "*cujus sumptibus et industriæ quotidie clerus Anglicanus augmentatur et crescit.*" He was a person of obscure origin, and owed his elevation to distinguished merit. From being clerk of the works he rose to the station of Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor to Edward III. He had the sole direction of the buildings at Windsor and Queenborough Castles, the former of which, the author says, looks down with disdain on the modern erections that occupy its ditch.

62. "At the funeral of Henry V. three chargers with their riders, excellently armed, with the arms of England and France, were led, according to custom, up to the high altar at Westminster."

In one work relating to the witches of Athol, was the following remark relative to education:

"This is a curious way of converting, by outrageously bad spelling, the best of appellations into the worst; a hint, too, for a regal title, which many queens, if they could but contrive to set about obtaining it, would richly deserve; so true is it that power, unless kept down by the most ingenious bits, bridles, and muzzles, is almost certain of becoming tyranny. The human animal is by nature a beast of prey—blood-raw till cooked by education."

In Chandler's Life of Bishop Waynflete, were the following notes, written in pencil by Mr. Beck-

ford, which, although of little importance, are not uninteresting:

Page 3. "Those eminent doctors in Oxford who, mutually complimenting each other with sounding titles, the 'Profound,' the 'Angelic,' and the 'Seraphic,' drew on themselves the reverence of their own times, and the contempt of all posterity."

158. "King Edward IV. died almost broken-hearted, April 9, 1432. His body was censed at the Castle-gate at Windsor by the Archbishop of York and Waynflete, who was also present, with divers great persons, when his effects were sequestrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, his executors not administering to his will."

159. "Richard III., the same year in which he murdered his nephews, issued proclamations for the reformation of manners, and one is directed to the Bishop of Winchester. Had he reigned in our days, the Bible Society and Sunday schools would have found, no doubt, in this moral monarch a distinguished patron."

173. "Sad times these, when a man's house was indeed his castle, as it was unsafe to abide in a dwelling not barricadoed and fortified."

174. "Waynflete, to make sure of getting out of purgatory, ordered masses in commemoration of the five wounds of Christ to be said for him five thousand times."

197. "Collateral Oratory near the high altar of the Chapel, Mag. Col. Oxf. This is now concealed by the wainscot of the Chapel, but a door leads into it from the cloister. It is small, with elegant stone-work, particularly the roof, and has been decorated with painting and gilding."

283. "Magdalene Coll. tricked out for the reception of James I. in Aug. 1605. The figures in the quadrangle

were painted, and particularly Moses had a new green coat on the occasion."

"L'Histoire, &c., Catherine II. Imperatrice de Russia."

20. "Incroyable Humiliation de ce pauvre Roi."

The allusion here is to the insulted majesty of Poland, in the person of Stanislaus Augustus, the last who bore the sceptre of that unhappy country. The writer is speaking of the policy which the imperious Catherine adopted towards the Polish king, with a view to break down his spirit, and prepare him with all due humility for the last demands of rapacious usurpation. This policy, which was quite congenial with the barbarous mind of Orloff, was carried to the most disgusting lengths by Repnin, the Russian Ambassador at Warsaw, for the purpose of ingratiating himself with the favourite. One instance in particular is mentioned. The king appeared at the theatre, the ambassador did not arrive till late, the performance had begun, and even reached the second act, when Repnin entered his box, and, piqued that the house had not waited for him, he caused the entertainment to be interrupted, and the piece to re-commence.

302. "'Humiliation d'Orgueil Britanique.' These words relate to an anecdote mentioned of Sir James

Harris, afterwards Lord Malmsbury, who is stated to have assiduously paid his court to Potemkin, and to have made considerable presents to his nieces, with a view to his especial favour, yet the haughty barbarian received the representative of the King of England in his morning gown, his legs naked, and sitting, while Harris was kept standing, for the purpose de bien humilier l'orgueil Britanique. But, in the person of such a representative, it may well be asked where was the British pride ?"

349. " On pretend que Gustave III. eut assez confiance en un certain Munck pour le charger quelquefois de le remplacer auprès de la Reine et même malgré cette Princesse.

" This Preux Chevalier, whom royalty so signally honoured, subsequently committed a forgery of bank bills, and became a miserable fugitive in Germany."

" La clemence des Tzars leur eut toujours éte funeste—argument en faveur des brutalites de Juan Basilovitz et Pierre Premier."

355. " Panin mourut d'envie et d'ennui maladie funeste a laquelle n'echappent guere les Ministres disgracies."

356. " Gregoire Orloff, devoré de remords, expire dans le desespoir."

366. " Outrages que la pudeur ne permet pas de raconte essuyé par des pauvres jeunes Russes."

This passage refers to an atrocious act of perfidy committed by Aga-Mahméd, in the true spirit of Turkish policy, on a party of Russian officers.

" Les canons furent rembarqués et la muraille abattue, Aga Mahmed fit alors venir les officiers Russes en sa presence ; et non content de les accabler d'injures et de mepris, il livra les plus jeunes à ses esclaves. Ces barbares leur firent essayer des outrages que la pudeur ne

permet pas de raconter, et d'autant plus etranges, qu'ils etoient, ordonnés par un eunuque. Ensuite on renvoya les Russes au rivage."

Some books sold at high prices solely because they had been the property of Mr. Beckford, A small volume of his caustic remarks on the black-letter gentry got into the Fonthill sale among the works which he designated for the hammer, entitled "A Catalogue of Books to be sold by Maister Thomas Frognall Dibdin." It consisted of only half-a-dozen leaves, was privately printed, and made up for binding with blank paper, yet it brought thirty-six shillings from being considered a *jeu d'esprit* of Mr. Beckford.

In Walpole's Life of Fox, Mr. Beckford showed his antipathy towards Charles Fox and his father, the first Lord Holland, whose opposition to the elder Pitt, his father's friend, he could not forgive. Among his remarks were the following:—

Preface, 5. "That unconquerable propensity to gaming —that disregard of character for which this distinguished senator and statesman was notorious."

Preface, 6. "Few men possessing such talents and attainments, have written less than Mr. Fox."

Page 8. "True portrait of Lord Holland, sketched by Horne Tooke."

13. "Charles boasted that from his earliest infancy he never failed to do what he had a mind."

24. "Beau Fox—See Vignette."

28. "His unpopular conduct at the commencement of his oratorical career, resented by the mob.

"Calls Alderman Oliver an assassin; compelled by the Alderman to retract his words."

"Moves in (1772) for the repeal of the Act which restrains the marriage of the Royal Family; this, it was observed, came with singular grace and propriety from Mr. Fox, whose father was married at the Fleet; quarrels with Lord North for having hinted that his orations were in some cases too figurative; said to have declared that he considered advice an insult offered to his understanding."

36. "Prepares himself for the famous debate on the 39 Articles by passing the whole night at the gaming-table."

39. "A string of bon mots which by no means proves, as the author asserts, any peculiar readiness of repartee or shrewdness of observation."

47. "His animation at a horse-race."

49. "His shabby behaviour to Mrs. Crewe."

59. "His taciturnity at the Literary Club, in Johnson's presence."

60. "A dip in the Devil's punch-bowl on the top of a mountain near Killarney, which nearly cost him his life."

80. "It was unanimously agreed by the Whigs (of 1782) in full divan, that the Duke of Portland would make an excellent man of straw for a prime minister under their auspices. The Tories of 1807 find him just as convenient."

86. "Coalition with Lord North, with the man whom he had been in the habit for eight successive years of loading with the most injurious epithets, and whose blood, he had frequently exclaimed, ought to expiate the calamities he had brought upon his country."

111. "Striking illustration of the liberality of his mind."

115. "Quite at home in the Irish House of Commons."

119. "Visits Gibbon at Lausanne, whose account of this interview appears not perfectly correct; he says, 'the people gazed on him as a prodigy;' but the truth is, that in this tour, in which he was accompanied by Mr. Armsted, they were totally neglected by the people of any consideration."

126. "Some of Burke's sallies of a serious kind."

168. "Loyal toasts."

169. "Testimony in favour of Arthur O'Connor."

171. "Discovered that Gibbon quoted many books as authority, of which he had only read the preface;—disliked this author's florid verbosity, but highly approved his historic concentration."

174. "Eagerness for novel reading."

176. "His most sovereign contempt for the abilities of Mr. Addington:—'Let him be King of Bath (said he), if he has interest enough at the Rooms to secure the appointment, and must have supreme authority.'"

103. "His strong French bias:—Burke asserted that the French Revolution had not only shaken all Europe, but Fox's heart into the wrong place."

234. "Not a few glaring inconsistencies pointed out:—He who in 1805 called for condign punishment on Lord Melville, in 1806 threw every impediment in the way of the investigation of the Marquis Wellesley's conduct. He who exerted all his faculties in condemning the income tax imposed by Mr. Pitt, became the advocate of the abrupt increase of that tax from six to ten per cent., and was not ashamed to declare, that its operation was to be arrested only when it occasioned a want of the necessaries of life."

242. "His belief in the immortality of the soul,"

261. "He neglected correct diction, and attentive only to his matter was often betrayed into solecisms of language and violations of grammatical accuracy."

In a work entitled "The Two Last Pleadings of Marcus Tullius Cicero against Caius Verres, with Remarks on the state of Modern Sicily," there were two specimens of the handwriting of Mr. Beckford; one of them a reference to a passage containing some account of the state of Modern Architecture in Sicily, a subject on which, by his taste, acquirements, and peculiar studies, that gentleman was particularly interesting.

"The fine granite columns taken from the theatre at Catania are now condemned to support broken entablatures, and every style of deformity which Boromini and his style could devise in the front of the Cathedral."

The other note of Mr. Beckford, which may shew the minute attention which he paid to what he read, stands as follows—

"Allusion to lousiness."

The passage with which it is connected is one which serves to prove the deplorable condition to which a vicious government and a degrading superstition have reduced the descendants of a people who once fixed the principles of taste, and enlarged the limits of civilised empire.

"The English peasant or mechanic who inhabits a country not so conducive to cheerfulness as Sicily, appears in general animated, and enjoys his hours of relaxation on a Sunday, but the Sicilian, in his numerous holidays after the pageantry of his religion is over, stands gaping in the streets or employs himself in a disgusting

operation, and appears not even capable of obtaining that negative state of happiness known to the Turk."

"Collins's Collections of Noble Families," contain the following notes and references in the pencilled writing :—Page 3. "Thomas Cavendish, the navigator, who had good possessions, and a fine seat near Trimley, in Suffolk, was of a delicate wit and personage."

This Thomas Cavendish was the celebrated mariner, who had the honour of being the second Englishman who circumnavigated the globe.

52. "Holish, Holes, Holeys, Hollis, Holles, and Hollys, all one and the same name."

"This nameful family ingeniously acknowledged to have run under ground in obscurity (like the river Arethusa), till, by God's blessing, Sir William Holles, Knight and Alderman, raised it to wealth and honour."

54. "A most candid gentleman of the family, nearly related to the first Earl of Clare, protests he would not scrape a chimney-sweeper out of his pedigree, to foist in a prince ; therefore, in order to proceed with good authority in his memoirs, goes no higher than the father of the first Sir William Holles, whom the Guildhall Register plainly declares to be Sir Wm. Holleys, of Stoke Com. War. yeoman."

56. "Much about the glories and prerogatives of Lord Mayorism—achievements of Sir Wm. Holles or Holleys whilst in office. In his Mayoralty he caused the Moor ditch, and all those ditches which annoyed the city, to be scoured—a grand and perilous operation, for as

Stowe observes, they were never scoured but once before."

86. "This Sir John Holles, the immediate descendant of a Warwickshire yeoman, had the assurance to solicit, and (through the corrupt influence of the favorite Buckingham) the singular good fortune to obtain, the princely title of Clare! the title in which my Lord of Warwick was so *emboged*. But what is it that a powerful favourite cannot do?"

Two large quarto volumes of Mr. Beckford's remarks of a similar character were subsquently extracted from his library at Lansdown, now in possession, with his other effects there, except what were sold at Lansdown tower, of the Duchess Dowager of Hamilton, his daughter. To receive the library, paintings, and articles of virtue, which he bequeathed to the Duchess, additional apartments were specially erected by the late Duke of Hamilton at Hamilton Palace.

The principal pictures sold at Fonthill not being reserved, were by masters of unquestionable excellence. Mignon, Baptiste, Cuyp, Tannay, Callot, Breughel, Von Kessel, Quintin Matsys, Brackenberg, Stork, Von Dalen, Guercino, Dobson, Cosway, Netscher, Steenwyck, Siguerra, West, Rothenhamer, Jordaens, Coello, Jansen, Mignard, Raphael, Perugino, Aberli, Vandevelde, L. Caracci, Orcagna, A. Vandervelde, Le Nain, Teniers, Velasquez, Cano, P. Vero-

nese, Bassano, Brewer, Both, Claude, Holbein, Vanderwerf, F. and W. Mieris, Bronzino, Polemberg, Rubens, Palma, A. del Sarto, L. Caracci, A. Mantegna, Old Franks, Van Eyck, G. Bellini, Mazzolino di Ferrara, Albert Durer, Wouvermans, Beniti, Leonardo da Vinci, Wilson, E. Vanderneer, Van Huysum, Rembrandt, Victor, G. Dow, Scalkin, Bergham, Carlo du Jardin, S. Rosa, P. Wouvermans, P. Neefs, Caracci, Michau, Jan Steen, Capella, Ostade, C. Loti, Paul Potter, Jamieson, Domenichino, Garofalo, Slingeland, Vanderheyden, Hooge, Metzu, Guido, Hobbima, Van Opstael, Watteaux, Venius, Backhuysen, Carlo Dolce, G. Poussin, and other distinguished masters.

The St. Catherine of Rafaelle, now in the British National Gallery, was purchased between fifty and sixty years ago in Italy, by Lord Northwick, for three hundred pounds. When Mr. Beckford saw it he said he would make the hundreds thousands to possess it, and the bargain was struck. It has been engraved by Baron Desnoyers. Waagen speaks of this picture in his work on the arts and artists of England, as one of Raphael's purest and finest works which this country possesses. Mr. Beckford parted with it to the nation for six thousand guineas, together with a Garofalo, and Mazzolino di Fer-

rara, for a thousand guineas, while it is doubtful if they cost him half the sum. Loredano, the Doge of Venice, by Bellini, in the National Gallery, came from his collection. When he left Fonthill he intended to have taken with him a picture of the Virgin and Child, with St. John, by Pietro Perugino, Raphael's master; but it was left for Mr. Farquhar. The picture was to be sold, and Mr. Beckford remembering it, said he had paid fifty guineas for it, and he would give that sum for it again. He obtained it for that price, and sold it to the National Gallery, not long before his decease, for eight hundred pounds.

When he removed to Bath, he was in his sixty-third year. He laid out some portion of the receipts of the sale of Fonthill in annuities. For one of these he paid ten thousand pounds to receive a thousand per annum, and living to eighty-four, it became a losing bargain to those who took his money.

It is a singular fact already mentioned, that he was made acquainted with the dishonest trick played him by the architect, about the foundation of the tower. He thought it his duty to make Mr. Farquhar acquainted with the incident; the latter received the news with the utmost coolness, observing, he was quite satisfied it

would last his time. Shortly after, the tower did fall over into the marble court so gently, that Mr. Farquhar, in another part of the building, was not aware of the accident. From that time the existing owner and Mr. Beckford became intimate, and Mr. Farquhar was so partial to him, that, had he lived a few months longer, there was little doubt he would have bequeathed Fonthill to its former owner, for he frequently observed he had a great inclination to do so. On the former being asked if he should not have liked the legacy, he replied, " Good heavens, yes, I should have been in an extacy at it, for it would have falsified the old proverb, ' You can't eat your cake and have it too.' "

CHAPTER VII.

LANSDOWN TOWER—VERSES BY MR. BECKFORD—COLLECTIONS OF VIRTU — PLANTING — ILLNESS AND DEATH—FUNERAL—REMOVAL OF SARCOPHAGUS—VERSES ON HIS DECEASE.

UPON removing to Bath, he took up his residence in Lansdown Crescent, and soon became busily employed in arranging his library and valuables, of which the reserved collection was very large. His house was on the eastern side of an opening in the Crescent which led out towards the hill. At first he added a second house to the first, connecting them by an archway thrown over the opening, and forming the prolongation of his library. After being some time in his possession, he gave up the house on the western side, and took that on the east, retaining the room he had built over the archway; and here he con-

tinued to reside up to the time of his decease, a term of nearly twenty years.

Incessantly employed and determining, upon a small scale, compared with Fonthill, to make a paradise of the wild in the rear of his establishment, up to the very summit of Lansdown, he purchased or leased the whole property for the distance of a mile on the side of the hill. Upon the hill summit he erected a tower, in order to obtain a view over a vast extent of country, of which it would else have been impossible to gain a knowledge. Some persons said he had an inclination to erect towers wherever he resided; that towers were spoken of partially in Vathek, and so on. Mr. Beckford himself stated that at Fonthill the tower was necessary to the character of the edifice, and at Lansdown to obtain the command of one the finest prospects in England. To the summit of this hill, in fine weather, with no east-wind, he generally rode on horseback in the morning, and walked back to breakfast, taking before he started a small quantity of chicken broth. In a few years he converted some fields, a stone quarry, and much rough ground, into pleasant walks and plantations, which he took great delight in continually improving. His changed circumstances did not damp his ardour. The following is a description

of the aspect of his improvements there, up to the time of his decease.

"Opposite the arch which he constructed, connecting his two houses, a road between walls, over which fruit trees hung thickly clustering," said the narrator of a visit to the spot, the same year in which the owner died, "a road between walls led to a door, which, on being opened, disclosed extensive gardens. On their north side stretched double walls, one above another. Parallel with the highest ran a walk, leading to an antique gateway, embattled, machicolated, and nearly buried in trees. Never, on all hands, was there such a prodigality of fruitage of every variety. The walls were in a blush with the warm tints of the peach and other wall fruit, glowing freshly in the bright morning sun. The principal path was overlaid with glittering quartz. Here were long espaliers, that groaned beneath their precious products of apple and pear; there huge pendent plums of all colours and sizes. The place seemed to be under the spell of enchantment. In front a flight of steps led upwards, and surmounting a terrace appeared almost Italian in appearance. A field of some extent next met the footstep, bordered by hedgerows of thorn, cut in irregular clumps, apparently to avoid the sameness of stiff clipping

in the customary monotonous mode. On the higher side of the field the ascent was bounded by palisades, beyond which a public path crossed, and a second row of palisades intervened, and then another enclosure, and afterwards another. Arriving at a plantation, a turf walk then curved along the hill-side. At short intervals, on each hand, beds of thyme, marjoram, and all kinds of scented and aromatic herbs were introduced, as if they had sprung up naturally, perfuming the air with their sweets. Rude seats invited to a notice of manifold variations in the prospect, generally formed of the block section of a felled tree. In one place, where there was an elbow in the road, on turning suddenly round, one of the most beautiful views was seen that could delight human vision. The elevation was considerable. Far beneath, with snaky involutions, a bright stream shone like liquid silver; tower, hamlet, grove, meadow, hill, mansion, and villa, were seen under every variety of aspect, until, blending in the offskip, they were mingled with the indistinct distance. A bed of camomile near, exuded its well-known aromatic perfume. A gentle breeze had arisen, tempering the sun's heat, and keeping the distant promontories in haze. Next came an open space of ground, covered with grass-grown mounds, where all was

as solitary as if it were the site of a buried city. From hence there was no prospect, the irregular sod being on one hand, and the front view bounded by plantations. On the left, in a wall of rock, yawned cavernous excavations, that had been made at some remote time, either for the excavation of stone, which, in the oolite strata, is always taken with more facility in the horizontal than the perpendicular direction, or to form habitations for our rude forefathers. Fires had blackened each yawning interior, and given them a grim, sombre aspect. They might have been taken for deserted tombs, by no great stretch of fancy, in a spot so full of solitary associations, where all was designedly left to the rough tutorship of nature. There was something strange and mystical about the appearance of the place. The sky above and the desolation beneath imparted the idea of an utter separation from the rest of the world.

"Proceeding along the left-hand boundary of this rude spot, thus seemingly shut out from busy life, a gate met the view, leading into a plantation, which being past, a wall with a small door through it crossed the way. Passing onward, the transition from the savage to the cultivated—from the deformed to the beautiful—was magical. It was the entrance to a garden

of a thousand flowers—a garden glowing with thickets of roses in full bloom, through which the path still led upwards. On both sides the floral assemblage sent forth a fragrance, a combination of delicious odours even to faintness, arising from the intensity of the perfume. They thickened and multiplied, on advancing along this enchanting spot, shut in on all sides, and breathing the gales of Araby. The roses here grew at random. No neat parterres, no clipped borders were seen, up to the spot where an Italianized house stood, evidently thus changed in aspect from one which had before existed on the same spot. Three narrow arched windows were introduced over a curve, which spanned the road. The classical foreign air it bore could not be mistaken. Here and there, towards the boundary of the flower garden, in the way of contrast, broad, green-leafed fig-trees set off, by their cool density of colour, the rainbow tints of the flowers on the nearer grounds. Passing beneath the arch, the garden continued for some distance, as before, still without any appearance of art, the path terminating in a dark grotto rather abruptly on a descent, having, on the right of the entrance, a small pool of water, nourishing large-leafed aquatic plants.

"From the delicious floral assemblage, the

scene changed to the subdued light of the grotto. Emerging from it, the ground bore no resemblance to that which preceded. On the right was a stone wall, at the foot of which was planted a variety of odoriferous shrubs in a border, bounded by a walk of no great breadth. Outside this was an extensive field, covered with short mountain turf, on which a few sheep were browsing, kept from trespassing by a rough wooden fence. Glancing in a western direction across the turf, unrelieved by a single wild flower, the eye first became sensible of its real elevation on table-land, far above most of the neighbouring hills, the summits of which were seen undulating like ocean waves.

"But what was in front? There grew a charming shrubbery, in every shade of verdure, here and there interspersed with flower and berry-bearing foliage. Over this irregular line of green, there rose a lofty tower, of a square form, crowned with a handsome and classical ornament, copied from the choragic monument of Lysicrates, at Athens, rising to one hundred and twenty feet, the well-proportioned columns and domed roof appearing to great advantage. Beneath the dome within was a square room, in which three arched windows, lighted with plate glass, pierced each face. On approaching the

extreme summit of the hill, the tower wholly disappeared, concealed by another shrubbery, a complete wilderness of artificial plantation. Sometimes the uniformity of the nearer ground was broken by little ponds of water, fringed with curious plants. Rustic seats were judiciously placed beneath overhanging umbrage, in dim shades, while the pendent boughs were suffered sometimes to reach the long tangled grass, overarched by the deep green branches. Here a plot of emerald turf intervened, through which sprung up the wild yellow tulip, close to lilies and violets, that seemed to owe their existence on that spot to a generous accident of nature. Every quarter of the globe had been ransacked to extend the variety of the vegetable kingdom on this spot. Rock roses of the sunny south were abundant. The Alpine schistus bordered upon thickets of sweetbriar in natural wildness; the libertine honeysuckle spread its tender branches, entwining amidst and over all, showing a remarkable luxuriance, breadth of flower, and strength of odour, and the *pinus arborea* assumed the character of a tree. Every climate, too, seemed ransacked to extend a knowledge of the vegetable kingdom. Among others were numerous specimens of rare plants. Of the pine genus there were rare specimens, the places for

the coniferæ being carefully sheltered, whenever needful. The Brazils, Mexico, and even the Himalaya contributed, with the productions of the British isles, to adorn this sequestered shrubbery, in which here and there the dark yew might be seen waving its funereal boughs in melancholy stateliness. The whole appeared connected with some dream of Eastern origin, which none but those who had revelled in the glories of happier climes could embody. In shady places, among stones, and where the rough surface sought concealment, there grew many varieties of fern. In one spot the Osmandi Regale waved its palmy foliage over beds of antirrhinum, and carpets of wild thyme alternated with common turf. Many of the trees and shrubs presented a novel aspect in foliage, so as to impart a foreign appearance to some portions of the ground.

"The harmony of the aërial brood here left undisturbed, made the thickets musical, if their mellifluous notes were any criterion of their regard for the deference shewn them. The thrush in particular seemed to have made it a favourite haunt, a thing in which the owner delighted, exceedingly regardful as he was of the animal creation.

"The sunny warmth, the odours, the silence,

the deepened shadows, and the air of adventure in the eyes of the stranger on reflecting upon the character of him who had wrought out so sweet a wilderness, seemed to prepare the mind for something more to come. Nor was this impression lessened upon arriving suddenly at an open space, — silent, solitary, green, and beautiful as a place of death should be, when in a leafy recess there appeared a sarcophagus of rose-coloured granite, about five feet high, and eight or nine long, polished up to the brilliancy of a mirror,—" Doubtless the tomb of the genius of the place—if genius can die?" and so it was. How beautiful a place for the last repose of wearied and ripened humanity! Here was, indeed, a sepulchre worthy the fleshless forms of the pre-adamite kings! Mr. Beckford had a deep feeling of devotion. One of his later poetical compositions was entitled 'Dies Iræ, Dies Illa.'

"'Hark! heard ye not that deep, appalling sound?
Tremble! for lo! the vexed, the affrighted ground
Heaves strong in dread convulsion—streams of fire
Burst from the vengeful sky—a voice of ire
Proclaims:—'Ye guilty, wait your final doom!
No more the silent refuge of the tomb
Shall screen your crimes, your frailties. Conscience reigns—
Earth needs no other sceptre—what remains
Beyond her fated limits, dare not tell;—
Eternal justice!—judgment!—heaven!—hell!' "

"Further on, not many paces, clearing the foliage a few yards, rose the tower already mentioned, the lower half having on two sides a square edifice a couple of stories in height, constructed of mellow freestone, highly symmetrical in shape, the windows narrow and circular-headed, composed each of a single sheet of plate glass. Mounting two or three steps, a door led into a small hall, on the left-hand side of which was the entrance of a room under twenty feet square, the prevalent colours in the hangings and carpet of which were scarlet and black. A second door at the extreme end of the hall, having arched panels of plate-glass, led to the tower stairs, and then to the apartments above, as well as others to those beneath. In this entrance hall, in a recess on the right hand, stood a noble pillar table of Sienna marble, and upon it three Etruscan vases of the fabric of the earliest time. Behind them was a mirror in three compartments, having semi-circular tops, answering in form to the windows elsewhere. The ceiling border of wainscot was ornamented with gilt cornices. The parallel rafters or beams overhead had their intermediate panelling decorated of a scarlet colour, at once pleasing and tasteful. Suspended cabinets on the walls, glazed, contained precious and rare

articles, arranged with the utmost taste. Agreeable combinations were carefully studied, while at the same time instruction was conveyed to the beholder by the illustration of objects, through their approximation to a regular series. Of these the Etruscan vases already noted formed one. A vase here considered unique, bore over a ground powdered with gold, the representation of a black and bearded Bacchus. There were antique curiosities in metal; among them a bronze bust of Caligula, with silver eyes, once the property of Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, found in Herculaneum. The workmanship was exquisite, and the likeness to the emperor imagined to be perfect. It had been the property of Prince Elbœuf, and was bought at Florence.

"This apartment on the left had a remarkable air of elegance and comfort, an unequivocal feeling of enjoyment. A rich and almost dazzling effect arose from the predominance of the scarlet colour over everything else in the room. Everything, too, was in its best place, to the minutest bit of pearl, crystal, japan work, or statuary. This was so remarkable as to generate an apprehension of disarrangement, and a natural desire to leave everything, as in the inspection of a regalia, unhandled.

"Over the mantelpiece hung a splendid painting by Hondekoeter, the pre-eminent object in which was a game cock in the full glory of his plumage, bright and glossy as in nature, and the red feathers in one general harmony with the prevalent hues of the furniture and hangings of the apartment. Still all was kept down, nothing tawdry appeared; all was subdued into a uniform glow, elegant, chaste, and striking. The fireplace was of Brocatelli marble. Facing it, under a latticed window, upon a large table of Egyptian granite, was an ivory vase lined with crystal, and daily filled by Mr. Beckford himself before his morning's repast, during the fine season, with the richest and freshest flowers; having intermingled, long, pendant sprays of jessamine, sweetbriar, and wild rose, setting off with their dark green hues the richer colours with which they were intermingled, and filling the place with fragrance. Such were among the delights of the owner, and few could arrange flowers according to their hues with so correct a taste, thus adding the gratification of vision to the variety of his pleasures.

"Everywhere there was something meriting remark. On the mantelpiece of this room were two sea-green lizard bottles of the rarest kind, some oriental cups, with ornaments on a scarlet

ground, and for the most part in gold. Some of the enamels here were wonderfully executed, and among them large dishes of the most costly workmanship. Vases of Italian porphyry, of verde antique, Egyptian granite, and Sienna marble, were placed upon stands, and carved oak coffers, with specimens of rare japan, inlaid with coral and gold, were appropriately placed. In the western window was a tripod, supporting a slab of Lumachelli from the Himalaya mountains.

"Among the pictures was a landscape by Both; the Doge of Venice, now in the British National Gallery, by Giovanni Bellini; a landscape by Cemaroli; the Thistle, a landscape by Wynauts; the Triumph of the Gods, by Froancken; the Tower of Babel, and a coronation, the last by West. Two fine enamels, and a Greek legendary painting of great antiquity, divided into three compartments, with a small Breughël, beautifully executed, hung over or near the mantelpiece.

" Ascending the winding tower stairs to the next floor, there stood in the centre a noble vase of polished granite, having bronze ornamented cornices, and four lions' heads protruding from as many openings or cells in the base, a

striking massive ornament, very beautifully executed.

On the left, upon the next floor, was a room hung with crimson, which outdid in beauty the apartment beneath. Nothing could be more soberly rich. The hangings, carpets, walls, all were of the richest crimson. The ceiling was of purple crimson, and gilt panelling On the south side stood an ebony cabinet of exquisite workmanship, the top a precious slab of green porphyry, containing some specimens of rare japan. There was a coffer here which had once belonged to Cardinal Mazarine, placed upon a table of Florentine mosaic. The tables were all made of rare Italian marbles, and there were candelabra of polished granite, vases of china, jasper, chalcedony, agate, cornelian, and other rarities, kept in hanging cabinets; in one of these was a curious Venetian glass vase, ornamented and gilt with figures of knights in the combats of chivalry, surprising by the freshness and splendour of its illuminations. The glass appeared thin, and not capable of sustaining the least violence, which rendered its preservation wonderful. Here, too, were a pair of candlesticks once in the far-famed Alhambra, having pyramidical bases, and covered with arabesque ornaments. Another pair of candlesticks was

executed by Vuliamy of the purest gold, after a design of Holbein. There was an enamelled salver by Jean Cousin, after Rafaelle, representing a feast of the gods — it came from the Farnese palace; and above all, was a small but celebrated bronze of John of Bologna, representing a centaur carrying off a female. A St. John, by Murillo, a battle-piece by Borgognone; the interior of a church by de L'Orme, the figures by Palamedes; two paintings by Peter Neefs; an interior, by Steenwick; two sweet Italian landscapes, by Herman Swaneveldt, the scholar of Claude de Lorraine; a palace saloon, by Basan; a head, by Albert Durer; Tobit and the Angel, by Elsheimer, and several other choice works of art were distributed in this apartment. A door in one corner led into a closet with a carved ceiling, the window trellised, and the frame-work gilded. This was lined with books, and beneath the shelves were rare articles in cabinets, leaving no space unoccupied.

A room adjoining this apartment, long and narrow, was exclusively devoted to the purpose of a library, and filled with select volumes. It was an apartment in which a studious man might spend precious hours. Each book fitted the place accurately throughout, in order to

husband room. Some were expensively bound, many in white vellum and gold, with devices relating to their contents. Morocco of all hues, highly embellished; missals and psalters of regal costliness, illuminated. Some contained miniatures by Julio Clovis, others gem-clasped, bound in tortoise-shell, engraved with miniature landscapes, flowers, and figures, copied from eminent artists; illustrations of the Lord's Prayer, of the Acts of the Apostles, and of the Old Testament, embracing every known print, and numerous drawings by artists of celebrity; Persian MSS.; Chinese printed volumes, oriental tablets, and rarer than all these, Japanese books were to be found here. Wainscot with gilt cornices was used in the bookcases with the happiest effect. Tazzas of precious marbles and Etruscan vases were placed on the tops of the bookcases; some of the last were very rare, being painted on a white ground. The entrance to this little library, for the apartment was small, was through a lobby, into which the light was introduced from the roof in a softened tone, falling upon an antique bronze of some unknown master. It was surprising how so much of elegance and utility could be introduced into a space so confined.

That nothing might be wanting, the *genius*

loci had not neglected an apartment for devotional purposes. Here the light was admitted through dim cupolas of ground glass, producing a very sobered effect as it fell upon a full-length figure of St. Anthony, with the infant Saviour in his arms, by Rossi. The marble of a mellow hue, from the nature of the light thrown upon it, was never more effective in religious sculpture; it only wanted to be placed in one of the little chapels of a catholic cathedral, with lighted tapers, to realize the design. It stood upon a pedestal of Sienna marble, in a niche, panelled with Egyptian porphyry and mosaic-work, having a border of Giallo antico and other marbles, bearing the inscription, "Dominus Illuminatio mea." Beneath the cupola were three semi-circular pictures, representing "The Temptation in the Wilderness," "The Annunciation," and "Christ's agony in the Garden," painted by a rising artist, Willes Maddox, whom Mr. Beckford patronized, from his being imbued with a genuine feeling for Italian art, imbibed on a visit to that land of taste. This promising artist has since paid the debt of nature at Constantinople, in 1853. The apartment thus decorated was called "The Sanctuary." A Virgin and Child, a copy from or imitation of Rafaelle, and the interior of a cathedral by Steinwick,

with three enamels upon sacred subjects, and books of devotion, were placed here.

Leaving the sanctuary and ascending the carpetted stairs of the tower to the square room at the foot of the lanthorn, called "The Belvidere," the drapery in which was of an orange colour, one of the noblest views met the eye that can be conceived. A vast panorama, the nearer part brown, and as desert as the Campagna di Roma, the more distant limited only by hill summits undulating far away, the blue mountains of Wales terminating the scene in that direction; the Severn sea sparkling in the sunbeams, and here and there dotted with a white sail, mere specks in the far-off landscape. An endless variety of objects basking in light, or valleys and hollows dark with shadow, struck the beholder with the variety of beauty. On the north a dreary plain, the scene of bloody combats in bye-gone times, designated by insulated barrows, and the later monument to Sir Beville Granville, who fell there, displayed a gloomy monotony.

A central staircase led up into the lanthorn of cast iron. Here the view was only to be obtained through the open work of the ornamental foliage of the frieze, which was filled in with plate glass. The view was more extensive than

that from the room beneath, from being more elevated.

Every thing connected with the edifice was strictly Italian, and every thing useful was so contrived as to be ornamental as well. The strong iron trellis work of the windows, designed to resist depredators, was gilt, and the pattern tasteful. There was nothing overdone. The chairs and couches were generally of ebony, with seats harmonising in colour with the draperies, some of them ornamented with gilded studs.

Never was there a more delightful place for study; and its owner availed himself of it in the early morning, passing over the mile of distance from his dwelling-house in the Crescent whenever the weather permitted, if the wind were not easterly, and spending an hour or two there daily before breakfast. The silence around, the rush of the breeze when high, or softly sighing as it swept by the tower, seemed to solicit thoughtfulness—to explain that it was a place for communings with the deep things of the heart—that there the spirit might almost hear repeated self-whisperings of its joys and sorrows, of far-fetched imaginings, and revived memories of bye-gone times. Interruption here, save from the gardener or his assistants, was

impossible, without scaling walls, or leaping fences nearly impracticable.

Such was one of the creations upon a minute scale of the owner and planner of the abbey of Fonthill in his later years. To the abbey it was a miniature indeed, but still a worthy thing of its kind, an epitome of that which more affluent fortunes reared to the wonder of the multitude, a creation of one who in retirement was the busiest of mortals; and, when compelled to resign his more magnificent labours—the labours of half a life—suffered not the change to shake his philosophy, but continued on a scale comparatively minute, the realisation of those designs which were dictated by a refined taste and a love of literature and the arts.

His Italy, published in 1834, and a second edition in 1835, was followed by his Alcobaça and Batalha in the latter year.

Both have been anticipated as to their contents in former chapters. The interest in each arises from the connection with scenes of the finished past brought up so vividly as if they belonged to a tour only just completed. The disclosures in such a work rise like the opening of a magic sepulchre, in which some fair being of bye-gone days is discovered with the burial flowers strewed over the body as fresh and

glowing as when life's warm current streamed along the veins. The roses of yesterday have neither faded nor decayed to the vision; the life is there, only apart from the power of motion; there is death present, we know, but we see it not. Just such was the feeling with which the dreams of Mr. Beckford's departed scenes lie upon the mind like a spell, disclosing faithful representations of actors and manners connected with individuals playing the game of authority in their little hour, and passing away for ever.

But there is more than this; for, while such scenes are disclosing, they bespeak a mind of a rare cast of character in the recorder of them. They exhibit continually, in an all-pervading tone, by the light of true philosophy, the small value of the pageantries and regalities so much regarded in the olden time. They show that their worthlessness has been ever the same, and that those extinguished, and those whom the self-conceit of the multitude regard at the present hour with awe-struck but diminished admiration, are precisely the same, that they palled upon the higher order of mind then as they do now.

In no situation in which an individual is placed can the advantage of a cultivated intellect be more apparent than in that of one who has

seen and described, even without the merit in description, what Mr. Beckford saw and described, all so full of matter for reflection. His view of all is autumnal, agreeing with the faded insubstantiality of what passed before him. The glitter of courts, the tale of departed grandeur, the storied remnants of ancient renown, furnish the one homily. All seems overshadowed with the predominant feeling that urges the inquiry, "to what mysterious object do these things tend?"

Literature and art are not omitted in his Alcobaça, nor that predominating love of the tasteful which ever distinguished him. On the contrary, he is enthusiastic in regard to both, revelling in the imaginative and beautiful. With all this there is an uplifted spirit far above what it describes, that the glitter of arms, and the finery of courts, cannot conceal—the secret conviction of their worthlessness.

The style of all his sketches is surpassingly good. It is original, sharp of outline, and rich in illustration. Sometimes, there is true poetry which glows with exuberance of colour, and the more delightful felicities of the English tongue. There is no wearying minuteness of description —yet it is effective! Nature is the idol worshipped; and, while the author gives his heart up to her altars, he pays his devotions with

ardour, and in refined language, as if determined they shall not be at variance with his feelings, and the consciousness of the value of the object he worships.

He was not insensible to the construction which might be put upon his devotion to pursuits so different from the rest of mankind, or upon his love of retirement. From his peculiar bias, his hasty temper, his close education, his pride, his incapacity for public business, his shyness, to say nothing of the broad and enlarged scale in which he viewed great questions, and his unfitness for the meanness and intrigue so essential to the success of the politician—this was evident to himself. He felt what the suffrage would be of those who could not comprehend him, but he treated it with contempt. This feeling is evident from the beautiful lines he wrote at Fonthill, entitled " A Prayer."

Like the low murmur of the secret stream
  Which through dark alders winds its shaded way,
My suppliant voice is heard :—ah, do not deem
  That on vain toys I throw my hours away!

In the recesses of the forest vale,
  On the wild mountain, on the verdant sod,
Where the fresh breezes of the morn prevail,
  I wander lonely, communing with God.

When the faint sickness of a wounded heart
  Creeps in cold shudderings through my sinking frame,
I turn to thee! That holy peace impart
  Which soothes the invokers of thy awful name.

O all-pervading Spirit!—sacred beam!
  Parent of life and light! Eternal Power!
Grant me through obvious clouds one transient gleam
  Of thy bright essence in my dying hour!

The life this singularly-gifted man led at Bath was as retired as that at Fonthill. He brought there the same habits, but they were upon a diminished scale. The inhabitants of the city in which he resided knew as little about him as those of the metropolis. He was seen occasionally on horseback, with the late Duke of Hamilton, passing through the streets, but not more than half-a-dozen persons, literary men and artists, were admitted to his acquaintance. His old porter at Fonthill, Pero, a dwarf, continued to be his porter at Bath. Old servants were still in his service, and strongly attached to him, as both his tenantry and domestics had been at Fonthill. Vincent, his gardener, between seventy and eighty years of age, had planted Fonthill in the newer part. Accompanied by one, and sometimes two servants, he rode on horseback every day before dinner, not very regardful of the aspect of the weather.

His course of life left little for the pen to detail. His health continued good nearly to the last. Contrary to the feeling with old people in general, he rather sought to be taken for an older man than he was in reality. Presenting a copy of his "Alcobaça and Batalha" to a friend one day, he said:—

"Now mark a singular thing, which will never happen to you again as long as you live. A few days ago I gave you my 'Lives of Extraordinary Painters;' I now give you another of my books, written seventy years afterwards—what do you think of that?"

"Your life will some day appear among that of Extraordinary Authors," was the observation made in return.

"Yes, and of extraordinary Artists, too!" he interrupted.

He sketched exceedingly well with pen and ink, much in the manner of Rembrandt's coarser drawings. But to return to his age, he made himself out eighty-four at the time he published his "Alcobaça and Batalha," when he could have been only seventy-eight. On a friend telling him that he knew his age from two letters to Lord Chatham, in one of which he said "William was made a Christian of last night"—

"Well, and no doubt you think a very pretty sort of a Christian I was manufactured into!"

He one day remarked, "I am almost ashamed at being so old. Death seems to have overlooked me. The longer we live the more we have to answer for—the more we sin."

Mr. Beckford died in the midst of his accumulations of pictures, books, and articles of virtu, on the 2d of May, 1844, aged eighty-four years and seven months. His illness was a fever, arising from cold caught in venturing on a ride, contrary to his custom, during a chill east wind. He struggled manfully against the disorder, and nearly to the last got in and out of his low truckle bed without curtains, refusing assistance until his weakness became overpowering. He then, probably with the conviction that his end was near, called for writing materials, and wrote to the Duchess of Hamilton, "Quickly—come quickly." The Duchess arrived in time to receive his adieu, and close his eyes.

The preparations for his funeral were upon the most superb scale. The tower ground where his sarcophagus stood ready, was not consecrated, as if that were a thing of any moment compared to the express wish of the deceased. It was therefore decided the funeral rites should take place in the cemetery at Lincombe, on the oppo-

site side of Bath to his residence. The preparations were on the most superb scale. A chariot and four, with mutes, led the way, containing the clergyman who performed the service. Two carriages with domestics followed these, and then came the hearse drawn by six horses; another carriage and six contained the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton as chief mourners, with the Marquis of Douglas and Lady Lincoln. Four chariots and four contained the Marquis of Huntley Lady Margaret Beckford's brother, the Earl of Dunmore, the Hon. C. Murray, the Hon. Captain Murray, the Hon. K. S. M'Kenzie, and Mr. White, co-executor with the Duchess of Hamilton, Major Blathwayt, Mr. Heaviside, Dr. Bowie, and several literary and scientific friends of the deceased. A number of private carriages followed, and not less than twenty thousand spectators. The spot designed for the tomb was enclosed, and the sarcophagus of granite, before spoken of, had been previously conveyed from the tower grounds to Lincombe. On the tomb was inscribed the name of the deceased, and date of his death, with this quotation from Vathek, "Enjoying humbly the most precious gift of heavenly hope;" and an extract from the lines entitled "A Prayer:"—

" ——————— Eternal Power!
Grant me, through obvious clouds, one transient gleam
Of thy bright essence in my dying hour."

By his will Mr. Beckford left the whole of his property to the Duchess of Hamilton, except a legacy of five hundred pounds to Mr. White, the co-executor, and some annuities to servants and others, desiring to be buried near Lansdown tower. His personal property was sworn to as under eighty thousand pounds.

To the satisfaction of most of his friends, his body was afterwards removed from Lincombe to the tower ground, where it ought to have been at first deposited. The whole ground has since been duly consecrated, an unimportant form, which might have been as well done after his deposition there, in the first instance, as in the mode in which it was ultimately carried out.

In person, he was not much above the middle height, well formed, and rather slender than full, with features indicating intellectual power, and small grey eyes of wonderful acuteness. His dress was almost uniformly a green coat with cloth buttons, a buff waistcoat, striped, breeches of the same colour as the coat, and brown topped boots, the fine cotton stocking appearing over them, much in the fashion of a gentleman forty years before. His apprehension was quick, and

his enunciation rapid. His voice was agreeable, his gesture energetic, especially when excited in conversation. When silent or examining any thing, he placed his freckled fingers over his mouth. His bodily activity was that of a man of sixty when he was above eighty; his face alone bore marks of age. He seldom sat down even when conversing, especially if particularly earnest. His manner was courteous and gentlemanly, while the impression produced on the mind of the stranger was decidedly that he was one out of the common run of individuals in the more refined ranks of life.

The last book he appears to have read and noted before his death was "Remarks on Custine's Russia," published by Newby. He had pencilled—

"A forced, bantering laugh runs tittering through every page of this volume; still less supported by facts than M. de Custine's strolling assertions. Upon the whole, a very weak and flimsy reply, leaving the most important accusations against Russia unanswered and unrefuted." April, 1844.

Some verses entitled "Thoughts suggested in Mr. Beckford's Park, the day after his decease," are not only a tribute of respect, but in themselves full of genuine poetic feeling.

The master is departed from his place—
Again by weeds each path shall be defiled:
The paradise that opened in the wild
Shall be obscured; yea, soon shall not a trace
Rest of that beauty art from nature drew:
Strokes that so well the master-artist knew!
The wild rose now shall wither in its bloom:
And the azalia droop as o'er a tomb!
Closed is the eye that watched them—cold the tongue
That praised—the hand that life around them flung.*
The moss'd-roof grot shall open to the wind;
The green-sward path that led to solitude,
Of leafy haunts where meditation broods,
The thorn shall hide, and bramble unconfined.
The wilderness shall grow again, and all
The beautiful that like a coronal
Crowned the bare hills depart like a far dream,†
The mind that cast its own reflection on
The earth, and covered like a sunshine gleam,
Is vanished from its place—a light that shone.

* Mr. Beckford must have left a large collection of manuscripts behind him. During several years, the writer of the above verses has frequently seen him on the Lansdown Hills, dismount from his horse, and diligently write down his thoughts: on such occasions, his servants would remain at a considerable distance, while, perhaps, the author would walk to and fro on a short space of ground, forgetful of time and place, for an hour together.

† It would be difficult to imagine anything more unsightly than Lansdown Heath, the part enclosed by Mr. Beckford. The writer of this note was in Italy when the enclosure took place; on his return, Mr. Beckford sent him the keys to the different gates, and to the tower; and he found the place transformed nto what may be truly termed a wild paradise.

Yet over all looks Summer's glorious eye,
As 'neath her glance no living thing could die!
So onward rolls the tendency of things,
The stream of life from its eternal springs.
A moment yet—and he who lingers here
Becomes the mourned, and draws the transient tear:
Leaves this loved scene by years familiar made,
Himself forgot—his memory a shade!

JOHN EDMUND READE.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRAITS OF CHARACTER.—CONVERSATIONS.—OPINIONS OF MEN AND THINGS.

Of one who led a life so retired it is only possible to relate unconnected traits of character, by which some idea of the individual himself may be formed. In the present instance even these are scanty. Mr. Beckford's observations, it must be premised, were remarkable for their adaptation to the class of persons, intellectually, to whom they were addressed. He seemed to take the measure of a stranger's character instantaneously, and to act upon a judgment thus rapidly, and in general correctly, formed.

No one was so inaccessible to strangers, or so difficult to become acquainted with, unless they were connected with literature or art. Besides his natural hauteur, there mingled with it,

however seemingly incompatible, a retiring manner to strangers. There was no kinder friend, nor one who, with all his naturally passionate temper, exhibited a more feeling or a more amiable disposition. Some mischievous person once sent him a blank sheet of black-edged letter paper, sealed and duly directed. His servants imagined they knew the hand; and being himself of the same opinion, he actually dispatched a servant to London at once, to ascertain if his surmise were correct, which caused as much surprise in the one case as the other, and the party apprehended to be the sufferer sent back a letter thanking him for his solicitude. Mr. Beckford rejoined:—

"London, 24th Nov.

"Respiro! The sufferings occasioned by the black-brimmed mysterious blank are at an end. Heaven be praised! They were acute at the time, as with great truth my trusty E. Becket informed you."*

Yet with all this kindness of disposition, the same propensity to satirise and make sarcastic observations which appeared in his juvenile outbreak at the Duke of Queensberry's, already

* The name of the servant dispatched to London.

recorded, seems to have clung to him through life. Thus, among those who did not know him intimately, and they were few, he was more admired for his genius and acquirements, than esteemed. He was regarded with a species of apprehension, on account of his withering power of sarcasm. This propensity was most obvious when in town he called upon some of his old acquaintance known in literature, the arts, or the fashionable circles, and uttered his opinions. Thus he vented his horror of picture-scrubbers, of jobbing in art, and of the frauds of some pretending dealers. He disliked all cliques in relation to art, and exclusive bodies, such as our Royal Academy. Such bodies repressed genius by despotic rules, were envious, and would tolerate no flashes of genius. An individual called his attention to a Murillo in the National Gallery.

"It is fine," he observed, "but the execrable Seguier* has scrubbed away its bloom and virginity. Skinners of pictures, these cleaners, scraping and scrubbing, and making spots over the finest works like bluebottle flies."

A friend, who was connected with art, thought

* Once picture dealer and scraper to the Gallery and Academy.

him much mistaken or else terribly prejudiced against one whom he was censuring, and at once told him he thought he was premature in his denunciations. After some difficulty, in endeavouring to remove the distaste thus expressed, he became open to an apparently reluctant conviction, that his views on the subject might be erroneous after having pronounced previously, time after time, that the advocacy was a mistake, and the advocate incorrigible. His memory was remarkable in this respect, especially if he were found right after all. Once in London he pronounced a severe opinion upon the conduct of a person of whom the world always spoke highly. A friend told him he was most assuredly wrong, and a long argument took place, neither party being convinced. Several years afterwards, the individual alluded to got into merited disgrace. Mr. Beckford's carriage one morning drove up to his friend's door, and on entering, the first thing he said was, "Well, who's right now?"

This was a specimen of his extraordinary memory; people in general, as they get old, forget events occurring of comparatively recent dates, though long bygone dates are fresh. Perhaps, too, the pride in this case of shewing he had been right, stimulated his recollection.

He had a great dislike to hare and fox hunting, and to similar brutal cruelty to animals; shewing one of his pictures representing a fox with the dogs close behind her, carrying her cub in her mouth, he said to one of the firm of Messrs. Smith, the eminent printsellers, "Look here—look at this poor creature! What sort of minds must these atrocious people have, to find amusement in the agony and suffering their cruelty occasions. My God! I would give a complete existence to see a thousand of these fellows served the same way themselves. Can anything be more absurd, then, that men—I mean self-styled men—for I call them brutes, should occupy the short term of existence in this atrocious manner. They are worse—five thousand times worse brutes than the poor animals they worry." When his favourite little spaniel Tiny died, it affected his spirits for some time, and he endeavoured to secure another which he imagined a relative of the former. He had Tiny buried near the Tower, and placed over its grave a marble monument.

He was remarkably correct in his dates as to past events. "As Dr. Johnson said, in my presence," he once observed; and his accuracy being doubted by the party to whom it was addressed, a reference to a biographical dictionary

shewed he was right. His tutor, Dr. Lettice, for whom he always showed a great respect, and to whom he afterwards entrusted the superintendence of the education of his daughters, introduced him to Johnson in 1780. From his account the Bear was not at the moment in a very good humour, being somewhat "sulky," and little more than civilities were exchanged. It was probable the name of Beckford set the teeth of the high tory Johnson on edge, the Lord Mayor Beckford not having administered the civilities of the table to the Bear as Wilkes did, and thus made his peace. One can scarcely imagine two individuals more unlike in manners and address than Johnson and Beckford.

He was not of a disposition in his youth to seek even Johnson's society when he felt it was unamiable, nor was he formed to overcome obstacles of moment any more than to push himself up against strong political opposition. Fortune he did not need. He would then have been indolent when he would have been required to be active. He had a perfect scorn for everything mean and contemptible, and would not deign to contradict the atrocious calumnies uttered against himself. He never spared the expression of his opinion in regard to the mean-

ness of any party, however high in station. His proud spirit worked out for him a world in his own imagination, in writing and study, accompanied by the simplest but most substantial and rational amusements in literature and art. As to his dinners and refreshments, so far from being extravagant, as the world's falsehood asserted, they were simply such as would suffice for a gentleman of perfectly good taste, and nothing more.

While hasty in temper, he was exceedingly kind-hearted, and gave away large sums. He would never suffer his name to appear in any charity list of subscriptions, which he said was advertising a man's good works, and that those really good should be secret. To any private application, before he would give, he would exact secresy, and feel annoyed if any acknowledgment were sent him. Finding the father of a promising young man had not sufficient means to keep him at College, he sent him directly a couple of hundred pounds. His advice to those young in years was to be patient, decided, and in everything to fear God. To street beggars he was perhaps too liberal, always keeping silver in one of his pockets for objects he judged to be in real distress. No doubt he was often imposed upon, but he would not alter the prac-

tice on its being made known to him. One day, riding out early, near the entrance of the Park at Bath, he suddenly pulled up on seeing a cripple, most of his limbs terribly distorted, a real object of misery. For a minute or two he looked upon the cripple with intermingled surprise and pity, then, as if recollecting himself, he put his hand into his waistcoat pocket, and taking out a handful of silver and gold intermingled, threw it down to the man, exclaiming, "*You* are, *indeed*, an object of charity," and rode away.

When at his house in Park Lane he went to the exhibition, views of pictures, and auctions of works of literature and art. He received no dinner company, except his relatives, who used to call him "The Caliph." He went once or twice in the season to hear some favourite opera, and generally retired to bed at ten o'clock. When in town he rode or went in his carriage about two o'clock, to the publisher, Jennings, in Cheapside; then, if not before, to Rundell and Bridge, on Ludgate Hill; to Bohn, the bookseller, near Covent Garden; and at four o'clock to the house of Smiths, the eminent printsellers, in Lisle Street, where he would sometimes remain a couple of hours. Then, calling

at the Duke of Hamilton's in Portman Square, he returned home to dinner at half-past six.

He said of course he could not remember George II. "I was not a year old when he died, but the king saw me when I was an infant in arms in my aunt Effingham's apartment in St. James's Palace. She was a great favourite with the young king George III., and with his mother. I well remember both of them petting me. Thus it was no wonder I became a regularly spoiled child both by my father and mother. I was the only orthodox one, and my father humoured me famously. I could tell stories that, considering my age, would parallel those told of Lord Holland and his son Charles Fox. My father had scores of natural children."

Not scores exactly. He recognised and provided for them all, as well as for a daughter, Barbara, Mrs. Wale. His sons were Richard, Charles, John, Rose, Thomas, and Nathaniel. He left each of them five thousand pounds, except the eldest, who married a lady with a large fortune in Jamaica.

On the passing of the Reform Bill, that measure which Lord Chatham had once recommended as well as his son, Mr. Beckford had some apprehensions about the peace of the country. He spoke of the decay of old families, and

old feelings natural to one of his years. The sovereign himself, with his pine apple-head, was, he observed, leading the movement. He feared about the future. Yet what could it be to him. The sight of a fine old picture, he said, or the interest in rummaging over the exquisite Missal of Marie de Bourgogne, which he had long possessed, afford him fifty times more enjoyment than perusing the speeches of the political demagogues of the hour.

Some singular contingencies occurred as to his purchases, connected with the lapse of years and changes in life. He was not in London at the sale of the Esdaile collection of drawings. He gave a London printseller a carte blanche as to price, to purchase on his behalf. A few articles were purchased there for him, and among them two coloured drawings by Albert Durer, one a highly-coloured representation of a parrot's wing. He had seen this sixty years before, in the possession of an old abbé at Vienna, who would not sell it, and when the owner died he bequeathed his collection to the Imperial Library. When the French took that city these drawings were stolen, passed through several hands into the Esdaile collection, and were purchased for Mr. Beckford.

So with the Strawberry Hill collection sold

by Lord Waldegrave. Towards the close of Horace Walpole's life, he was annoyed by hearing of the extent of Mr. Beckford's collection, and his extravagant purchases, which he said would raise the price of articles of *virtu* so high, that it would prevent his adding to his own collection, and he became irritated about it, declaring that in all events Mr. Beckford should not have anything of his, and he therefore entailed his property on so many that it appeared next to impossible that Mr. Beckford should survive them all. Singular to say, Mr. Beckford did outlive them all, and purchased many important curiosities, which were conveyed to Lansdown. He himself went more than once, and taking up a little tazza, said, "I will have this mounted in gold," his agent purchasing it accordingly.

He sold his "Letters on Italy" to Bentley, the bookseller, for five hundred pounds, four hundred in cash, and the rest at a short-dated bill; as to the latter, he did not know what to do with it, and presented it to his agent, and with the former bought a sweet picture by Gerard Dow, but he did not relish the high finish of the Flemish artist, became dissatisfied with it, and sold it for five hundred pounds. It was in the collection of the Duchess de Berry, and he had designed it for his tower. This

place having been already described, his larger establishment at Lansdown Crescent merits the next observation, which is given nearly in the observer's own words; premising that an attempt having been made to break into the tower, his architect came to tell him of it, and that it had been unsuccessful. Being somewhat flurried, as he observed:—

"The tower has been attempted by thieves, Mr. Beckford."

"Have they carried off anything?—is much injury done?" enquired the owner, calmly.

"There is nothing gone, but they have done some injury to the building, having very nearly attained their object."

"Mr. G———, do not be so excited—don't show so much emotion. Where will you and I and the tower too be in a few years? A hundred pounds will set all right again, I dare say —don't be excited about it."

Descending through gardens where "every plant flourished luxuriantly, I emerged upon green sward, and continuing to descend was at last stopped by a massy portal, resembling the entrance to the castle of some giant Blue Beard. I then," says Mr. Redding, from whose notes of his conversations with Mr. Beckford the following extracts are made, "came into a garden,

the walls covered with fruit trees. Nectarines and peaches strewed the walks—the year having been a plentiful one of fruit. Crossing this garden, I found myself close to the arch which Mr. Beckford had built for connecting two houses, and in a few moments I was at the door of his mansion in Lansdown Crescent. I was not destitute of curiosity to discover the cause of the attention with which I had been so honoured, nor a whit less curious to have an interview with the author of Vathek.

"Those who had attended me to the door, knocked and went their way. It was opened by a dwarf, named Pero, apparently over the middle age, who had held the same post at Fonthill. He was not the smallest of his race, but sufficiently ordinary. The origin of the story about a dwarf inhabitant of the place was thus cleared up. A second servant led the way up a spacious staircase to the drawing-room floor, announced me, and retired. I observed that the staircase and landing-place were thickly hung with paintings. There was a full-length of the noted Lord Mayor Beckford by Romney, and the original portrait of himself, which has been engraved.

"I found that the arch from house to house was only a continuation of the drawing-room

floor, which greatly extended it. The entire length was occupied as a library, and filled with books. There was nothing showy, at the same time that everything bore the impress of good taste. The windows were of plate glass, and upon the tables were numerous handsomely-bound volumes. The room was sober, tasteful, and substantial. Red and deep purple, in perfect repose, reigned throughout in the hangings. The book-cases were of wainscot, with gilt cornices, and over them were pictures. The furniture was simple and good. There were bronzes, marbles, and candelabra, all with a calm, subdued air. The only piece of massy furniture was a mosaic table. The carpet was red Persian, with a purple fringe.

"I walked towards the further end of the room, whence the owner of the mansion moved forwards to meet me. He was then in his seventy-fourth year, though in appearance many years younger. He returned my salutation, when I thanked him for the honour he had done me. He smiled, and welcomed me with the affability and air of a finished gentleman of the old school, inquired how I liked the tower, whether I had examined the books, some of which were rare editions, and what I thought of it as a place of study. I replied that my time there had been

too short to look into more than one or two volumes; that in some I looked at I saw his notes, but that I was too anxious to avail myself of the invitation to his mansion, and the honour of a personal interview with him, to lose much time upon a secondary object. I had noticed an edition of Wilkes' Letters, in which he had made remarks, and also some works relative to the early part of the reign of George III., a period about which I had always felt a peculiar interest, as the prelude to that disposition of things that in subsequent years had involved England in a succession of evils. Mr. Beckford replied, that it was also a period of great interest to himself, for he had lived all through it.

"He observed that, though he saw few persons in Bath, he knew all that passed in relation to literature and art, looking towards an ample table, upon which lay several periodical works. 'There,' he said, pointing to a book-case, 'is a volume of which you are the author. But I have engaged to be your cicerone. Do me the favour to sit, and I will show you some of the curious works in my possession.'

"Here it must be understood that I cannot give more than the bare substance of some of our conversations. Sometimes literally to imitate or copy Mr. Beckford's manner, so peculiar

in similar conversations, or even his words verbatim, would be out of the power of most persons situated as I was at the moment.

"Mr. Beckford then set before me an Eastern MS., the substance of which appeared to be a species of leather. It had once belonged to Shah Aulum at Delhi. There were painted upon it the portraits of the great men of the Mogul court, and the representation of various ceremonies. The lines in the execution of these portraits could not be retouched, and the hand that drew them must have acquired a wonderful correctness to delineate likenesses so well. This MS., I found afterwards, was once the property of M. Langlés, the great French orientalist, whom I had known in Paris in 1816. At his death Mr. Beckford gave eighteen thousand francs for the precious and curious relic.

"Perfectly affable and easy in the mode of the old school, the owner of the MS. entered into explanations, which memory cannot recal, upon a subject on which I was really little familiar. We ceased to examine manuscripts or curiosities, and continued in conversation.

"Mr. Beckford observed that, when young, he was fond of the East, and felt so still.

"I replied I had thought as much from his tale of Vathek. It was one of those works

which had delighted me in my youth, the most striking and imaginative I had read. Neither of us moved from the table. His conversation became exceedingly interesting. He had plunged into it at once, and I soon saw I must give up sight-seeing. I lamented I knew nothing of Eastern languages and literature out of the common, and endeavouring to return to the subject of Vathek, observed—

"'I thought of the tower of the Caliph just now, while I was upon Lansdown, fancying the youthful idea might have been carried on through later life—the tower in Vathek, at Fonthill, and here lead to such a conclusion.'

"'No,' he replied, 'I have an extraordinary sight. God rarely gives men such eyes. I am partial to looking over a wide horizon—it delights me to glance over an extended landscape. To do this at Lansdown, one must, to see anything, be elevated, from the nature of the ground. The tower at Fonthill was as naturally an appendage to such a structure as it would have been to a real abbey. I love building, planting, gardening—whatever will keep me employed in the open air. I like to be among workmen. I never kept less than a hundred employed at Fonthill. Sometimes I had three hundred. Wishing to have something besides

a study on the summit of Lansdown, where the view is so extensive, I erected the tower, or else, as you know, I should see nothing.'

"'It was a conclusion from the advantageous site?'

"'It was. People are continually deceived in judging of the motives of others, though your conclusion was natural.'

"'The tower of the Caliph is prominent in Vathek, and I am not the only individual who laboured under the mistake.' I remarked that I had never read his Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters.

"'It is a laughable thing enough. The editor of the 'Quarterly Review' seemed to have read it. He says he is not aware under what circumstances it was given to the world. Do you know the editor of the 'Quarterly?'

"I replied that I did, and considered him one our ablest living writers—an accomplished man, though I would not pay the same compliment to all his contributors—that I deemed his novels superior to most others of the day.

"Mr. Beckford thought his novels were not properly appreciated. 'How should they, when so little but rubbish is current? The 'Quarterly' complimented me on a work which I threw off as a *jeu d'esprit*. It is true enough,

as the reviewer states, that I designed to hit the criticisms on the Memoirs of the Dutch Painters. How could I fail to do so with such an opportunity, their foolery and trash were so obvious.'

"'But it required the result of much observation and experience to satirize so faithfully the follies of the Dutch biographists?'

"'Great pains were bestowed on my education. I was living amidst a fine collection of works of art, under competent tutors. I was studious and diligent from inclination, and fond, too fond, of reading whatever came in my way. After my classical studies were finished, and while I worked hard at Persian, I read French and English memoirs of all sorts.'

"'You visited France at an early age?'

"'Before I was eighteen I had mingled much in French society.'

"I expressed my apprehension that I was trespassing upon his leisure. He assured me that I was not. He then observed, 'You have written criticisms upon my works—upon 'Vathek,' 'Italy, Spain, and Portugal.' I know they were by you. If you had read my thoughts, you could not have better understood the springs that moved me in my observations—you could not have struck them out more faithfully. I

feel indebted to you for your remarks. The moment your wishes were made known to me about the tower, I desired every facility to be afforded for your gratification, as far as my means of satisfying your curiosity extended, and placed my carriage at your service for that purpose. My sketches were drawn up from notes very inefficient in themselves, but my memory supplied what was wanting.'

"Reverting to the 'Sketches on Italy,' I observed, 'I am perfectly well acquainted with the minutest objects described in the first six chapters of your second volume.'

"'Then tell me, if you think the description faithful?'

"I replied in the affirmative—that some objects, now, I feared, no more, were so accurately described I was instantly at home in a scene of my childhood. The stone pyramid, the scent of the wall flower, the grove of elms, Arwenick, once the seat of the Killigrews, Trefusis, the vast brakes of furze scenting the air with the perfume of apricots, the primroses and violets in bloom the first week in March, the soft blue sky, the calm sea, the very fishing-boats, the Lisbon packets—these were pictures familiar to me at once—'and more,' I observed, 'you were walking backwards and forwards at Green Bank,

opposite Trefusis and Flushing, when I was a toddling child.'

"'That is singular, and by accident, after more than half a century, we approximate again in Lansdown. The course of human destiny is a puzzle. How blind we are to our coming existence from childhood! What are become of all my Portuguese friends, whom I was then on my way to see! Death has taken them all!'

"I inquired if the Portuguese Court was remarkably dissolute. Mr. Beckford replied, 'Not more so than other Courts were in those times. There was great goodness of heart in some of the nobility and ecclesiastics; but the Portuguese were an indolent, luxurious race. The country people were excellent, and tainted with few vices. The Lisbon *canaille* was abominable. The most flagrant vices and crimes were common there, and the ignorance of all classes deplorable. The Prior of St. Vincent, his friend, was possessed of great learning and accomplishments—an excellent man, who had few equals in Portugal. But the beauty of the climate—it was a heaven upon earth—he longed more than ever for such a climate here.'

"I arose and took leave, for the day was drawing rapidly on. Mr. Beckford came to the head of the staircase, pointing out the subjects of

some of the paintings, as, descending, I wished him a good morning. He requested that, while in Bath, I would call upon him without ceremony as often as I felt inclined—he was always at home between twelve and two o'clock.

"I did not fail to make use of the invitation I had received. Upon calling the next time, I found the author of 'Vathek' in a sitting-room on the entrance floor of the house. I had met a friend on my way, who told me he had seen Mr. Beckford alone that morning, in a field beyond his garden, amusing himself with cutting up thistles. He was now seated at a grand upright piano-forte of remarkably fine tone. The instrument was placed at the farthest end of the room from the window, which faced the south, against a curtain of fine scarlet cloth, hung very full along the wall, suspended near the ceiling by rings to a bright metal rod. This, I found, was for the purpose of deflecting the sound of the instrument. Mr. Beckford rose on my entrance, and before I had taken a seat, requested me to look at the St. Catherine of Raphael, hanging over the fire-place, turning the key in the lock of the plate-glass frame he had placed before it, for the sake of preserving it from the ravages of time, though he observed the glass was injurious to the view of the paint-

ing from the reflection. 'Is that not beautiful?'

"I replied I thought it was very fine, but that Raphael seemed as partial to *embonpoint* in his females as Rubens.

"'No, the women of Raphael are Italian in grace—they look round, but firm and well formed. Those of Rubens are Flemish and Dutch, flaccid and oysterish, as if they had been fattened in their own quags and salt marshes.'

"There were several fine pictures in this room, but their owner kept my attention fixed on the Saint Catherine, saying he had attempted to make some verses upon it, but he was become too old for poetical composition. I observed, it was an inspiring theme, and he then said, 'Try it.' (*See* Appendix, p. 394.)

"'There was a paragraph,' he observed, as he drew his chair to the table, taking a seat by his book and pencil, his common indoor companion, 'there was a paragraph in the 'Times,' which stated that Fonthill Abbey cost me a million. The love of the world for anything but the truth is as great as ever—can you credit such an absurdity? Now I will tell you what it did cost to a shilling.'

"He rang the bell and ordered his steward to

be sent to him, but it was presently announced that he was gone out.

" 'No matter,' he rejoined, 'as the 'Times' reckons by wholesale, I can tell you to a thousand pounds—that will do. My whole outlay on Fonthill was two hundred and seventy-three thousand some odd hundreds, and that was spread over sixteen or eighteen years' outlay. The old house at Fonthill was built on a low, unhealthy spot,—that was the origin of my idea about a new building.'

" 'The fall of the tower was an unfortunate accident.'

" 'I apprehended it, though it was no longer mine when it fell. I might some day have been crushed like a lobster in my shell I had remained. They had neglected to secure the foundation. The foreman, on his death-bed, after I had parted with it, let me know that it was insecure. 'Good heaven!' said I, 'what can be done?—Cannot any means be adopted to render it safe?' The answer was 'No, nothing but taking it down and reconstructing the foundation.' I had been living like Damocles with the sword over his head. Perhaps the immediate cause of the fall was something that had gone on within which imparted a shock a little before the fall took place.'

" 'It must have caused you great regret to quit such a building, and find it so soon dilapidated?'

" 'Not so much as you might think; I can bend to fortune, and have philosophy enough not to cry like a child about a plaything. The chancellor took away from me by a decree in the cause of what lawyers call justice, two large estates * which had been sixty years in my family.' He then mentioned the number of slaves upon them, of which I am not certain. 'This decree the Chancellor Eldon accompanied with the reflection 'that Mr. Beckford had plenty of property left.' That was my reason for quitting Fonthill. I was sorry for my tenantry and the throwing many poor people out of work in staying my improvements. I had no choice, living there would have been too expensive. I took away with me the things which I most valued, and have them here.' †

" Speaking of misrepresentation regarding him, I remarked, that they arose from ignorance of

* They produced together, it was said, £30,000 per annum; the plea was a failure discovered in the title.

† Mr. Beckford, the most exact of men in money matters himself, had no control over his distant agents and managers. There is great reason to believe he was often very ill-used. Some of his agents made considerable fortunes as his diminished.

his mode of living, as when they spoke of his sitting down daily to forty dishes.

" ' Why thus distort things? We must not oppose received opinion. We must believe all, if we would ourselves be unmarked and not misrepresented. Our associations must be those of everybody else. We must tacitly assent to frauds and falsehoods. People live by each other's example. A universalism rules. Soon no single voice will be listened to, there will be no solitary advocates of new truths in anything. What the many do or dream will be the law. All important truths have been the result of solitary efforts. None have been discovered by masses of people—it is fair to suppose they never will. They are the result of knowledge with reflection in highly-gifted minds. Great rivers flow from solitary springs.'

" ' A universal experience goes for nothing, if your observation be not correct.'

" As to the people, I should have been as happy to serve them as my father was, had it ever been in my power. I belong, as my father did, to the popular side.'

" ' Your name could never have been agreeable to the court. Yet I saw in an old Court Magazine for 1782, an account of your going

down the centre dance at St. James's with Miss North, on the queen's birthday.'

" 'I was much too young to be an object of antipathy, or to take any political part during my father's lifetime. Was not his reply to the king good? He should have been in office during the riots of 1780, but he was not then alive.'

" I replied that I had read the rejoinder with admiration. Did he not think that the public were much deceived in the character of George the Third? Lord North's correspondence, recently published, shifted the perseverance in the American war wholly upon the king.*

" 'It cleared North of all but weakness, in suffering the king to sacrifice his political

* There have been efforts made lately to impeach the truth of the spoken address of the elder Beckford to the king—this is the day of impeachments in all similar cases. If so, how came it that a ministry and court ready to go any length against the constitution, never denied what it was so easy to have denied in the court papers at the time? The Lord Mayor Beckford was a man of great nerve, and precisely one who would dare such a reply to the half-insane monarch, whose disease was the only excuse for the reiterated displays of an arbitrary will. That Beckford did not deliver the speech at all, a man of the most resolute bearing, is one of those idle tales which gossip, party feeling, and a love of novelty delight to invent and circulate.

character and humanity to the royal obstinacy. Yet the royal declaration, not long before its sincerity was brought to the test, that he, George the Third, would lay down his crown before he would acknowledge American independence, might have deceived ministers more gifted with penetration than Lord North. Pitt was driven into the war with France by the king. The abandonment of his early principles—principles which had made him so popular, the violent measures he pursued, and his swamping the House of Lords with new creations of which he was but the royal instrument, showed his preference of power over principle.'

" ' He might have resigned.'

" ' He loved power, and was proud of it, but had not the pride of his father, who, though a courtier in manners and fond of fame too, would not suffer a king to rob him of his self-respect. His ambition was higher—more honourable.'

" ' I have often thought there was more meaning in Pitt's dying exclamation than was generally understood,—that is, if such an exclamation was really uttered, which, too, has been denied.*

* Pitt died under great bodily suffering, if the mask taken from his face immediately after death be any indication of it. In general, death removes all traces of

Lord Chatham took great pains with his education, I believe.'

"'I remember he was very particular about the words his son used in conversation. I arrived once at Lord Chatham's when William Pitt had been absent on a visit, but was hourly expected home. I was in the apartment with the father when William came in.

"'I hope you have spent your time agreeably, William?' said the Earl.

"'Most delectably,' replied the son.

"Lord Chatham put on one of his sternest looks—stern, indeed, it was, with his eagle features as he could look when he pleased, 'Delectably, sir! never let me hear you utter that affected word again!—Delectably, sir!'

"Mr. Beckford spoke in high terms of Lord Camden, another of his father's friends, whom he denominated the 'Cato of the Bench,' no-

living agony, and the features assume a remarkable placidity, but it was not so here. Mr. Beckford stated, that calling upon Nollekens, the sculptor, just after Pitt's decease, he showed him the cast from his face taken just after he died. It was so horribly distorted—so frightful, apparently from pain, that it was not of the smallest use for the work which Nollekens was about to undertake. "It almost scared me," said Mr. Beckford; "there were no traces of my old and early acquaintance. The mask was fearful to look upon."

thing could shake his integrity. He had voted for Lord Chatham's celebrated motion in the House of Peers, and the king took away the seals, which for some time none of the bar would take but Mr. Yorke, and he, seized with remorse in consequence, put an end to his own life, before a patent could be got ready for him. 'A little accident that could hardly happen in the present day among the aspirants for such an honour as the royal conscience-keeper—circumspice!'

"Many as were his collections and books, he found in a moment what he sought without reference to a catalogue. He rang for no servant, even if what he wanted happened to be in another room, but fetched it himself. He exhibited to me on one occasion a portfolio, in which were letters to himself from the Earl of Chatham and his son William Pitt. 'The great statesman, unless when 'thumbscrewed with the gout,' haughty as he was in public life, exhibited great kindness and affability in private. We youths exercised ourselves in writing, carrying on a fancied correspondence on some particular subject, upon which he made his remarks. I might have preserved many notes of that time very interesting,—one does not under-

stand in youth what trifles time may change into gold."

"Though but eighteen when the Earl of Chatham died, he said he well remembered the state of the public mind regarding him. He observed, that it was impossible to judge of the respect in which that great man was held, by any display of public feeling towards a political character of the present day. The king hated Chatham's great superiority of mind, and feared his popularity. The Brunswicks were a heavy race. Lord Chatham's conduct about America regained him the popularity he lost by accepting a peerage. Lord Chatham outlived my father. No chief magistrate ever gave such entertainments as he did. My father's speeches were not written by Wilkes, as his enemies pretended. They were not very intimate friends. My father was not a good speaker, but was a good writer. He had been educated at Westminster School with Lord Mansfield. Lord Chatham was too high-minded for George the Third, who was a man of coarse feelings. High-minded noblemen are never court favourites; the subject must not touch the hem of the royal robe. I have seen something of courts at home and abroad. There must be no competition with royalty—all must be prostrate, and

then anybody may fatten upon good things—did you ever see William Pitt?'

"'The boards of his coffin too,' I replied. 'I was one of three hundred who alone were admitted into the Abbey at his funeral. I remember Lord Chatham's coffin, which on opening the vault, they say, was found upon its side. Some people said it was because he wished to turn his back upon his son. I had never been in the Abbey until that day.'

"I should scarcely bear to look into that vault—all the past would rush upon me; melancholy recollections haunt me. William Pitt had great ability, but he wanted the lofty soul of his father. I have lost many friends whose remembrance comes forcibly upon me in speaking of early times. Look into my letters. I lost my friends, and was almost fearful to acquire new, lest I should lose them, in turn. When I went last to Portugal, what change a short time had made! It was subsequently to that time when I visited Mr. Beauchamp, whom you recollect.'

"I replied, that I was too young to remember him at that period. I had spoken of knowing Pengreep rather than its owner. I did not recollect him.

" 'Well, when I passed a day or two at Pengreep, the weather there in March was as fine and as soft as in Portugal. I sat there, making a looking-glass of the water, full of vehement hopes, anticipating the orange groves of Portugal, and amusement, which I much wanted, for I was a young widower. I found all I sought, and what have they become—friendship—all you read of my friends, dark, cloudy thoughts that accidental circumstances recall with intolerable bitterness.'

" Here for a few moments he was silent, talking to himself, as he often did when alone. He seemed for a moment as if he were hardly conscious of the presence of another person. This habit he had, too, when walking or riding out of doors.

" I happened to mention that Dr. Wolcot told me his friend, Governor Trelawney, of Jamaica, said he could not look in Pitt's (Lord Chatham's) face in the House of Commons, for his eyes nailed him to the floor.'

" 'Truly characteristic—his nose, too, was like an eagle's beak, ready to tear open his prey —you knew Wolcot?'

" 'For many of his last years I spent some little time with him every week.'

" ' He was old when he died ?'

" ' About eighty-five.'

" ' The ' Quarterly Review' had a very abusive article upon him after his decease, I recollect.'

" Gifford wrote, or published it, well knowing its allegations were false—they had been enemies—the article affected to deplore Wolcot's end in poverty and wretchedness, a sort of judgment upon him for satirising people of condition ! Shield, the composer, several artists and literary men, Lord Coventry, blind, too, used to visit him, to the last. Gifford knew Wolcot had an annuity from the booksellers; he had some small property besides, which came on the decease of a sister ; he never spent his income, and at his death left duty-paid legacies to his two servants.'

" ' Tell me more about him.'

" Here I went at length into a history of all I knew of Wolcot. Mr. Beckford listened with great attention, seeming in a reverie.

" ' Wolcot was the most delightful company I ever knew. He charmed my visitors at Fonthill with his wit and story-telling—he knew the two worlds well—men and books — he came to see me with Lord Nelson.'

" ' That was many years ago ?'

" 'Nearly forty—yes, forty—*labituret labetur!* Sir William Hamilton, whom you read of in my sketches, I first knew in Naples. I was not more than twenty years of age then. Sir William came home to retire from his duties after thirty-six years of service. He rode the antiquarian hobby, as you know, but he understood his *ménage*. Sir William Hamilton was near seventy when he came home. I invited him to Fonthill. He had married the too-famous Lady Hamilton, who survived him. She was, nobody knew who —she came with Sir William and Lord Nelson; Wolcot and he arrived together—many were visiting me at the same time. I gave a sort of *fête* at the Abbey, only then half finished. Lady Hamilton figured there before Lord Nelson, much to her own satisfaction, in the character of Agrippina—it should have been Cleopatra. She represented the character well—I must do her that justice. Perhaps Nelson inspired her. Wolcot enjoyed the scene greatly. A pressing engagement called him away after a week's visit, and I never saw him again. How well he wrote—how original his style and humour! He understood character thoroughly — he played with human foibles! He repeated an epigram on his setting a nightcap on fire, he had borrowed of Lord Nelson, while sitting up read-

ing.* Sir William Hamilton, my old friend, died two or three years after this visit. Some of his finest antiquities are in the Museum.'

" ' Was the second Lady Hamilton a fascinating woman ?'

" ' I never thought her so ; she was somewhat masculine, but symmetrical in figure, so that Sir William called her his Grecian. She was full in person, not fat, but *embonpoint*. Her carriage often majestic rather than feminine. Not at all delicate, ill-bred, often very affected, a devil in temper when set on edge. She had beautiful hair, and displayed it. Her countenance was agreeable—fine, hardly beautiful, but the outline excellent. She affected sensibility, but felt none—was artful; and no wonder, she had been trained in the court of Naples—a fine school for an Englishwoman of any stamp. It was a hell of corruption. Nelson was infatuated. She could make him believe any thing—that the profligate queen was a Madonna. He was her dupe. She persuaded him at last that she had

* Afterwards published in Peter Pindar's works :—

" Take your nightcap again, my good lord, I desire,
For I will not keep it a minute ;
What belongs to a Nelson, where'er there's a fire,
Is sure to be instantly in it."

Wolcot had once lashed Sir William, for his antiquarian enthusiasm.

a daughter—a Nelsoness. She never had a child in her life. She riveted Nelson's heart by telling him it was through her means his ships were fitted and victualled. The fact was, no minister had ever such a preponderating influence at the court of Naples as Sir William Hamilton —it was his affair. He had been all-powerful there long before he saw his second wife.'

" 'There was the breach of treaty, and the murder of Carracioli afterwards.'

" ' We must veil that horrible affair, it will not bear repetition—it is a melancholy incident.'

" Speaking of Hope and Anastasius, he declared it was a considerable time before he could believe that story was written by him. Hope exhibited less apparant capacity for the production of so fine a thing than any author he had known. He had read the work again and again. The fidelity of colouring—the perfect delineation of Greek character—the knowledge of detail—the mind displayed, made it a matter of mystery to him in some degree still. That any one should live to be old before he produced a literary work of such a high character, was surprising; the world was full of miracles. Mr. Hope's ' upholstery book ' was no promising precursor of such a tale—it would for ever puzzle him how it happened. ' What a fine passage,' said he, ' was that descriptive of the ruin of Euphro-

syne—how heart-rending!' I was obliged to lay down the book when I read it the first time, before I got to the conclusion—it was agonizing—the picture is worked up to indescribable horror. I asked myself if human nature could reach such a pitch of depravity as is painted there; yet no doubt it has done so. We find unsurpassing horrors in real life. Hope's work is a singular and strange one. What admirable keeping—the real test of the author as a novelist. Just keeping is a secret few attain. Educated persons see glaring discrepancies which escape the generality of readers in this respect, and fling away the work half-read—it exhausts one's patience. The ladies, who so admirably hit off the little follies of society, and describe the social life of the hour so well, fail in attempting things which they have no business to attempt. What woman could have writen Anastasius, if the portion not sufficiently delicate for the female pen were out of the question. They cannot describe naval life, military operations, nor scenes of shipwreck, without breaking down. Greece and Rome are sad puzzles to them. They are always caught tripping about consuls and senators.'

"'Men make the ancients their study in youth,' I remarked.

"'Yet among men how few succeed.'

"Meeting Mr. Beckford at a flower-show early one morning, in Sidney Gardens, I mentioned that I was going into Monmouth and Glamorganshire; and intended to see the observatory at Clifton in my way, where I had heard there were some fine telescopes. He said he should like to hear how I liked the scenery, and what state the observatory was in. On my return, calling at Lansdown, he enquired which of the ruins I preferred. I replied, of course, Tintern.

"'O, but the castles?'

"'Chepstow.'

"'What, not Ragland?'

"I replied in the negative; because Ragland was a show place. Wyatt had been set to improve the ruin.

"'Improve a ruin! Wyatt? Time is ruin's architect—so Ragland has been Wyatted too! I saw it then before it was 'improved.' What have they done?'

"'Removed the fallen fragments—kept the green sward where they fell, neat and trim as a bowling green, for walking upon—set up a stone table with timber legs in the roofless hall. You feel in a moment art has been intermeddling. Chepstow has been left to time and storms. Then there is the dungeon of Martin to interest by association.'

" ' Martin's prison was something like Bonnivard's, close to the water. He was there long enough to exclaim, as truly as Byron made him him do—

> ' It was the same at length to me,
> Fettered or fetterless to be.'

" ' I know Bonnivard's prison, and have spent hours near, watching the trembling waters that were precipitated into the lake, or soothing my ears with the ripple of the waves against the shore, dreaming of all that was lovely to me of which I had been deprived.* Ragland came by marriage to the Somersets in 1520. It is long since I saw it. Your ' improved ' ruin puts me in mind of one shattered by lightning in the grounds of Mount Edgcumbe, which its lord ordered to be repaired! What of the observatory ?'

" ' It is not completed. I looked through a fine refracting telescope, but there was too much dancing vapour or mirage in the air to see distant objects well. There is no reflector yet set up—the size of a reflector, half as large again as Herchel's forty feet instrument, was spoken of —might not a house be seen with it in the moon ?'

* Referring to Lady Margaret Beckford.

"Mr. Beckford was delighted at the idea.

"'I repent never having studied astronomy. There is a touch of astrology in 'Vathek,' I believe; but astrology is a very obscure science, adept in it as I am still pronounced to be by many. Except what every body knows of the stars, I know nothing. I wish I was better acquainted with some of those distant worlds. Ten years younger, and I would build an observatory on the point of Lansdown towards the Avon, three hundred feet high, furnish it with instruments, and shut myself up until I was master of the science. I am too old now—I must think less of this planet—

> 'Le cerf volante dont le ficelle casse,
> Tourne en tombant tourne et tombe toujours!'

Ours is a miserable atom of creation—we and all our solar system — amidst the many that dot and sparkle along the infinity of space. How much is to be discovered! How few of these magnificent worlds will glasses ever enable man to see? What sort of people inhabit them? Is life there—death—original corruption, which Dr. Whitby wrote so well against? I lament my ignorance of astronomy—I cannot learn it now—we do not live half long enough to acquire the hornbook of life.'

"This allusion to shutting up in the observatory recalled to memory that I had heard Mr. Beckford purchased Gibbon's library at Lausanne, and shut himself in it for a long time.

"'I bought it to have something to read when I passed through Lausanne. I have not been there since. I shut myself up for six weeks, from early in the morning until night, only now and then taking a ride. The people thought me mad. I read myself nearly blind.'

"I inquired if the books were rare or curious. He replied in the negative. There were excellent editions of the principal historical writers, and an extensive collection of travels. The most valuable work was an edition of 'Eustathius;' there was also a MS. or two. All the books were in excellent condition; in number considerably above six thousand, near seven perhaps. He should have read himself mad if there had been novelty enough, and he had stayed much longer.

"'I broke away, and dashed among the mountains. There is excellent reading there, too, equally as good to my taste. Did you ever travel alone among mountains?'

"I replied that I had, and been fully sensible of the mighty impression they make. I asked if he still retained Gibbon's library?

"'It is now dispersed. I made a present of it to my excellent physician, Dr. Schall or Scholl.' (I am not certain of the name.) 'I never saw it after turning hermit there.'*

"I remarked that some books with his notes in them had been overlooked and sold at Fonthill, so I heard, and that I had now copies of some of the notes. He replied:—

"'I sold much there, but in reality little upon which I set a high value. I retained the best, and have them here. Do not suppose that more than half the furniture disposed of there was mine. I sold many costly things of no use anywhere but in such a residence. Do you think I would have disgraced my house with Chinese furniture?—that was not mine, it was put in by the auctioneer.'

"His temperament was decidedly cheerful: but, even in age, it was that of one who went to excess in feeling of every kind. One long accustomed to have all he desired—to the world retiring, reserved, distant, full of hauteur, cynical, and impatient. To friends all gentlemanly frankness and affability. Hence opposite descriptions of his bearing are given. In nothing was he more remarkable than in taking rapidly,

* This library was sent to England and sold, a few years ago.

at a glance, as it were, the full measure of the party who addressed him, and humouring his conceits, for his knowledge of mankind was perfect. He looked into the very hearts of those whom he admitted to an intercourse with him, shaping his course accordingly. It was only where he saw that the whole bearing of a principle or doctrine promulgated was understood, and that chapter and verse could be brought for it, that he would frankly open, and disclose his own sentiments on the point.

"He was not such a churl, though it was said he did deny George IV. a sight of Fonthill, as not to be willing to oblige a stranger with the sight of his grounds. But he was overcome with letters and applications from all kinds of persons, some impertinent enough, so that at last he ordered his steward to open and return all such as were not of moment, giving him only those whose superscription was identified by the handwriting. A trayful of letters was sometimes taken in from his door of a morning. He never refused permission for those to see his grounds when the application came through any one of whom he had the slightest knowledge. He was assuredly right not to tax his time merely to gratify idle curiosity, especially where the extent of that curiosity is in this

country so indelicate and purposeless, as royalty itself, and our palaces can bear witness.

"To continue the conversation. He had been speaking of Selden. I had recently seen the house in which Selden was born, and showed him a small sketch, shaded rather darkly with pencil.

"'It is a humble place, indeed,' he observed; 'you have made the light and shade Rembrandtish. I like such effects, however rough. What a glorious fellow the Dutchman was, without grace or beauty. He threw about his light like another sun. What an expressive colourist—what strength he had—the very Samson of art—his native dykes and dams stagnating all. How unfortunate that the nature he copied partook of his mental constitution—he revelled in Dutch grossness, but even that he made the most astonishing thing in painting—he was a miracle in his day, he is so still—he will be so for ever; but let me show you a sketch I have made for an observatory.'

"He produced some outlines in which every convenience was provided for astronomical instruments. It had grown out of our former conversation, and my mention of going to see the Clifton observatory. There seemed to be abundant room for every thing required, except

the large reflector of which we had spoken. Nothing could be more simply applicable. Architectural design was evidently familiar to him. I think he once said he had received some initiatory lessons in his youth from Sir William Chambers. I observed that a dome was wanting over all, for the reflector.

"'No,' he observed, 'an instrument of sixty feet focus would not answer there; we must consider the elevation, three hundred feet. We must have the reflector upon the brow of the hill close by—but there it is all a *château en Espagne!*'

"Among other incidents, he related one respecting the late Duchess of Gordon, so well known for her shrewd, unblushing front; and sticking at nothing to serve her purposes, which were generally too notoriously palpable to be mistaken. He had spoken of shutting himself up in Gibbon's library at Lausanne.

"'I once shut myself up at Fonthill to be out of the way of a lady—an ungallant thing to any lady on earth but her with whom it occurred. You must well remember the late Duchess of Gordon, as she was the continual talk of the town for her curious mercenary ways, and mode of entrapping men with her brood of daughters. I could have served no other lady so, I hope—

I never enjoyed a joke so much. At that time every body talked of Mr. Beckford's enormous wealth—every thing about me was exaggerated proportionately. I was in consequence a capital bait for the duchess—so she thought; I thought very differently. She had been told that even a dog kennel at Fonthill was a palace—my house a Potosi. What more upon earth could be desired by a managing mother for a daughter. I might have been aged and impotent—no matter, such is fashion's philosophy. I got a hint from town of her intention to surprise me with her hard face at Fonthill—a sight I could gladly dispense with. I resolved to give her a useful lesson. Fonthill was put in order for her reception, with every thing I could devise to receive her magnificently—not only to receive her, but to turn the tables upon her for the presumption she had that I was to become the plaything of her purposes.'

"'The splendour of her reception must have stimulated her in her object.'

"'I designed it should operate in that manner. I knew her aim—she little thought so. My arrangements being made, I ordered my '*mayor-domo*' to say, on the Duchess's arrival, that it was unfortunate—every thing being arranged for her grace's reception, Mr. Beckford had shut

himself up on a sudden, a way he had at times, and that it was more than his place was worth to disturb him, as his master only appeared when he pleased, forbidding interruption, even if the king came to Fonthill. I had just received a large lot of books—nothing could be more opportune—I had them removed to the rooms of which I had taken possession. The Duchess conducted herself with wonderful equanimity, and seemed much surprised and gratified at what she saw, and the mode of her reception—just as I desired she should be, quite on tiptoe to have me for a son-in-law. When she got up in the morning, her first question was, 'Do you think Mr. Beckford will be visible to-day?'

"'I cannot inform your grace—Mr. Beckford's movements are so very uncertain—it is possible. Would your grace take an airing in the park—a walk in the gardens?'

"'Everything which Fonthill could supply was made the most of, whetting her appetite to her purpose still more. My master of the ceremonies to the duchess did not know what to make of his master, the duchess, or his own position. 'Perhaps Mr. Beckford will be visible to-morrow?' was the duchess's daily consolation. To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, came and went—no Mr. Beckford. I read on, deter-

mined not to see her. Was it not serving a woman of such a coarse nature quite right?'

"She remained seven or eight days, magnificently entertained, and then went away without seeing him. She was very angry, and said of him in her rage things too scandalous to have escaped any woman's lips but her own. 'Think of such a woman's vengeance; such a woman as the duchess was, who never suffered anything to stand in the way of her objects!'

"The splendour and wealth she saw dispensed at Fonthill no doubt increased her envious disappointment, and enhanced the bitterness of the contumely she afterwards heaped upon him.

"Mr. Beckford was one day reading a translation of some Hindu dramas when I called. I think they were those translated by Wilson a few years ago. He inquired if I had seen them? In reply I said I had long lamented being unacquainted with eastern literature, except through one or two translations by Jones and others. I added that I had a catalogue of Sanscrit and other eastern MSS. in my possession, given me by the late Sir William Ouseley. Mr. Beckford not having seen it, I sent it to Lansdown to be at his service. The next day he sent me all his printed works, including the third edition of his sketches, which contains, so he wrote in the

book himself, a page or two more than those which preceded it. He thanked me for the catalogue, but 'ten times more' for a little volume of mine, then out of print, descriptive of the Alps, 'recalling them vividly to his recollection,' and inviting me to Lansdown, that we might talk over the scenery.

"I found him in his library taking down a book. 'Here I am, as usual, nestled among all the good things that intellect has produced—my walls are 'instinct with thought'—I inhale here the essence of departed wisdom — the breathings of its spirit.' He was looking for the trial of Sidney.

"'Did you never remark,' said he, 'that there was no such thing as a fair trial in political cases until of late years. Juries were only the tools of the judges—the judges tools of the court—the innocence or guilt of the party was an indifferent affair. The original object of trial by jury was subverted by the judges. For ages a trial for treason was a farce, the *finale* being whatever the court desired it should be—the judge a sort of agent for the court, the jury the servants of the judge. The jurymen under the good old Saxon institutions were themselves the judges. It is surprising how stupid the people were formerly as to their rights, from not being

able to regulate such things by concert, and a feeling of their own power. Of all judicial proceedings I ever read, one of the court of Thoulouse was the most edifying. They executed the prisoner under a sentence admitting his innocence—there was something more honest about it than in our old mode of management in state trials.'

"'I do not know it,' I interrupted.

"'M. Teronde,' said the judge, 'the court does not find you guilty in the least; but being well informed of your inmost thoughts, has condemned you to be beheaded and your estate confiscated.' You will find the case in the ecclesiastical history of the reformed churches of France — it happened in the 'sixteenth century.'

"A MS. lay on the table. 'That,' said Mr. Beckford, 'is my 'Liber Veritatis,' which I thought of changing to 'The Book of Folly.' I pull the peerage about sadly. I have recently amused myself by examining its claims to be 'gentlemen;' in the heraldic sense I mean. You cannot think how few peers there are who can claim ancestral honours, yet all pretend to do so the moment they get a coronet. Nobles in the heraldic sense are not peers exclusively; they are those only who bear a coat of arms, the

older the more noble—they need not have a title at all. A minister may make a peer of anybody, but he can only through the crown make him a noble of inferior rank to a country gentleman whose family has borne arms before him. On the continent a count may take precedence of a prince, not of a royal line, if he be a noble of older standing. There are not thirty of our true nobility in the house—why pretend it is otherwise? A peer of to-day, it is true, will do for legislative objects.'

"Mr. Beckford then proceeded to quote examples of the mode in which peers had been made — the 'why' and 'wherefore' — exceedingly amusing. He knew the history of every peer carved out of late years, and gave some curious examples of their recommendation to ministerial *beneficence*, with their qualifications; clever and caustic. Two thirds of the House of Peers had been added in his time. The old peerage of the country was sunk beneath ministerial creations for political ends.

"'Where was the system to stop? The constitution had been abused. Any minister might destroy the independence of the House of Lords, as had been done under George III., to cripple opposition to his extravagant and ruinous wars. I have nearly finished my work—every syllable

is true. I must not publish it. Truth is a bitter draught.'

"'But the publication may do good.'

"'It might—the peerage is become dog-cheap. At the present rate of creations the House will soon require Westminster Hall for a place of meeting. A peerage in this great country should be a distinction envied by men of likelihood and pretension in the first instance.'

"On taking leave of Bath and this singularly gifted man, he said, 'Where are you going?' I replied to town. 'I have a house in Park Lane, the entrance in Park Street. I shall be most happy to see you there.' I called upon him accordingly. I had picked up a copy of 'Huerte' from a shop window, where it lay open at a page that contained two lines upon a subject on which we had recently been conversing. Mr. Beckford had never seen the edition—I wished he would accept and add it to his collection of Spanish books, and came to tell him so. He was not within. I left a note, which, besides speaking of 'Huerte,' expressed my surprise at seeing a paragraph in the 'Morning Chronicle' which had so close a relation to a subject on which we had been conversing, I feared he might imagine it had come from me. I stated my utter ignorance of any person connected in the remotest

way with that publication. He replied by note—

"'There is nothing to pick off that dry bone 'Huerte,' but the passage you have noted, which is really curious. The little paragraph squeezed into the 'Morning Chronicle,' I am told, was copied, *literatim et verbatim*, from the 'Herald.' Who sent it thither I cannot conjecture; but I am most certain, from internal evidence, it was not you.

"'If you happen to be disengaged next Sunday morn., about twelve, pray come to me, and I will read the Vathek episodes to you in part. These I may possibly soon publish, but I cannot bring myself to let out the 'Liber Veritatis'—*ce n'est pas toute verité qui est bonne à dire!*'

"I was in Park Street just after church time. Mr. Beckford spoke again of Byron's great anxiety to see these episodes, which is found in the poet's correspondence. He expected the Duke of Hamilton, and would wait a little before commencing.

"'If he comes in you will know his opinion on some of the passages. I speak without partiality, when I say that there are few of a more correct taste, or more capable of giving an opinion upon literary subjects than the duke. Many do not think so. He is reserved by

nature; but you will hear what a discriminating perception he possesses. I have marked passages for alteration at his suggestion, and I have great confidence in the soundness of his judgment. He has written nothing. Men of rank, who live idly, will not encounter the toil of writing. There may be talent and inclination without ardour to overcome labour.'

"The episodes were written on letter paper, in French, apparently many years ago.

"The time drawing on, and the duke not arriving, Mr. Beckford commenced reading. It was a gloomy day in February. He sat back from the window at least two thirds of the depth of the room. The light was indifferent, and yet with no difficulty he read through both. He stopped but rarely, to make remarks upon particular passages. He was then, I believe, seventy-eight years old, yet wore no spectacles, and read a full hour and a half. He pronounced French with the old court accent. Of the episodes I can say no more than that they struck me forcibly as possessing much of the character of 'Vathek.' One of them depicts a beautiful half-angel, half-mortal abstraction, in connection with love, telling admirably in the author's eastern manner. I urged the publication of the episodes while the author was so well

able to superintend it himself. He replied, 'I will not let the manuscript go under a thousand pounds—I will not let my writings go for nothing.' They were wild, in the Eastern taste, and full of imagination, but there was nothing, in them more exceptionable than in Vathek.

"Here I remarked that those whom his old acquaintance, Peter Pindar, described as eating and drinking out of other men's skulls, would balance the small quantity of manuscript against the price for which they could afford to sell it to the public. I feared the episodes would make so little in print, and consequently bear so small a price, that the sum he demanded would not, on that account, be paid—I would inquire, if he wished me.

"'Do,' he replied, 'then you will perhaps translate them for me. We can examine the translation by the French afterwards.'

"I said I would make the requisite enquiry; but it terminated as I foresaw it must.

"'They shall not have the MS. under a thousand,' said Mr. Beckford.

"It is to be hoped these episodes will not be lost to the world. A touch or two in them, I remember, recalled the style of Voltaire. I said as much. He replied, 'It was very possible I was right—he thought it might be so.'

" He one day told me had been at his banker's to see if he could afford to purchase the sketches and drawings of Sir Thomas Lawrence's collection.

"'I shall keep them in the country,' he observed, 'if I do no more—they will else be dispersed—I assure you there is nothing like them here, or anywhere else, to be obtained for the money. It is shameful the country does not buy them. Except among a few gentlemen, there is no sound taste for the arts in England. Collections are made from ostentation by people of wealth, who do not know a good from a bad picture. The government is not sensible, in the true point of view, of the value of art to the nation. A minister picks a committee of taste out of the House of Commons, as he would a committee for any other purpose, and this committee does nothing but blunder. There must be a feeling for art—mere admiration won't do—people admire, and affect to be struck with works of art, because others affect the same thing. Just as an opera audience cries, 'Wonderful!' at a performance of which it does not comprehend a syllable. The beauty of art must be inwardly felt—the mind in it must be read, interpreted. Picture shews will not do that. There is Raffaelle—he

is at the head of painting, everybody says—his pictures it is safe to admire and applaud. Ask why Raffaelle is the prince of painters—they cannot tell you. Now an Italian amateur of the lowest order will explain that and more. A just taste for art is a cultivated taste; there is no royal road to it, as too many think there is. I am sorry I cannot just now afford to buy the Lawrence collection. I have not 22,000*l.* in my banker's hands. I have been spending money lately.'

"'In improvements?'

"'In planting. I have crowned Lansdown with a forest since you were there.'

"He seemed delighted with the change he had thus effected.

"'With a forest?'

"'With a forest—Birnam wood is come to Lansdown. The Bath people may call me a magician, Vathek, or the devil now, with some reason. The Bristol folks who travel the lower road, seeing trees upon Lansdown where none appeared a few weeks before, rub their eyes—they cannot believe their own sight—how can it be! You have seen my gardener, Vincent—almost as old as myself—equally uncomfortable [illegible]—he came to me and said,

" 'Now, sir, there is only one thing wanting to make your grounds perfect.'

" 'You want a job, Vincent—what is it?'

" 'Why you have no shade between the two gardens. The sun shines hot there in summer —it should be planted, that you might walk in shade all the way up.'

" 'Nonsense, Vincent,' said I; 'before trees can grow up there, where will you and I be?'

" 'Don't say that, sir,' said Vincent; 'you can trust my word—you shall walk up there under the shade of your own trees in the spring —next spring—every tree twelve feet high. If you, sir, find the money, I will find the trees. It is the first week in October, the time to set about it.'

" 'Well, Vincent,—I will find the money— get to work—get the trees.'

" 'For many weeks I renewed my old habits. I was out with the workpeople from morning till night, planting. There is nothing more for old Vincent to do, unhappily—he will die of *ennui.* You will be surprised at Lansdown forest when you come to Bath. Another year the trees will be all I can desire for shade. I shall have a woodland walk again—I shall hear the spring songs of the birds there, on that hill, where there was only turf so lately. Are you fond of the

lark's song—the warble as it mounts in the air? —it is more delightful to me than the song of any other bird.'

" 'There is a peculiar gleesomeness in the lark's song. I have heard it too on the very spot far away from Park Lane, under the 'soft blue sky,' which you describe in one of your letters as mounting from among the herbage, that scented 'the air with the perfume of apricots.' "

" It is the song of a glad, innocent heart on a sunny day. I hear it on Lansdown with as much pleasure now as I ever did in my life. Nature never lets us tire—we never forget the love to our mother. Abroad or at home, I always gave some time to solitude—in my early youth I disliked large companies—I could not think, it confused my ideas. In Portugal, France, Italy—you know the Alps—you feel them, or your Gabrielle says wrong—I enjoyed nature most alone. I was enraptured in early life with the country; vanity led me into the circles of fashion. I lived in Switzerland among the Alps; at twenty-six, under a bitter domestic calamity, I found their solitudes soothe me as nothing else would — I have loved solitude more since. I had inexhaustible animal spirits, but they never prevented my stealing into temporary peace, be-

yond the dissipation in which I might be figuring—my letters on Portugal show that—you have read my running away from the gluttons of Batalha and their pampered dinners—what a ride I had that day. Massena and the French burned that superb monastry — it looks well as a ruin I dare say. I should like to see it now —what a lesson it would be to the recollection of former pomps and vanities! Time takes all from us but his hard lessons. My poor dog is dead—my old companion. I expected it before.'

"I had missed the dog—a spaniel, black and tan colour. I presume it was sent and buried near the tower on Lansdown, where a little marble memorial lay ready to mark the spot, anticipating its interment.

"Talking of painters one day, I asked him which was Raffaelle's best work.

"The 'Madonna del Spasimo' at Madrid. I have mentioned it in my 'Sketches' — it produced a more striking effect upon me than any other picture I ever saw. One must become half-Catholic to enter fully into the glories of Italian art—religion with us is a cold, reluctant duty. We acknowledge God, but fear to love him. We are afraid of any thing that fits our minds for devotion — we make religion a duty,

not an affection—when the formality of worship is over, we have done. The true spirit, superstition, devotion, whatever you will—was in the heart of the Italian artist—it oozed out at the end of his pencil, bathing his work in the beauty of holiness.

" Passing from subject to subject, he observed that he had just called upon the Duchess Dowager of Sutherland, an acquaintance of long standing, of whom he had few left.

" ' Peel went out just as I arrived. Sir Robert wants something to do to pass his time, now he is out of office. Whether he was trying to inoculate the duchess with his anti-ministerial feelings I do not know, but she seemed very apprehensive about property being endangered in the existing state of things. I told her I had no such alarm. There was no danger to be feared for property until the finances became deranged from the taxes not being sustainable—until the interest to meet the debts of George III. could not be provided. All who have any thing to lose must become discontented before property is in hazard, except in a temporary riot—there will be many warnings—every body now has some property to lose. I was in France during the Revolution—that began with disorganized finances —Necker would have arranged all, but the

jealousies of party prevented—they turned out Necker, and cut their own throats.'

"'You knew his daughter, I presume?'

"'Before her marriage, in her father's time. Did you know her when you were living in Paris?'

"'I was introduced to her in Argyle Street here in 1814 or 1815. I called the first time early, wishing to see her alone. Mademoiselle de Stael told me her mother was never up until two o'clock —it was then nearly three.'

"'That was her custom. I knew her too, but it was at Coppet, a lovely place near Geneva, long, very long ago. She preferred the *Chaussée d'Antin* — a woman in her inclinations, she thought like a man—wrote like a man—luxuriated in the stagnant vapours of a large capital, where she played the owl—she loved to display her ordinary fullness of person by wax-light. She would have exchanged her fame for beauty —how womanish! — Her figure when young was good—I remember her a very symmetrical young lady, who might have sat, as the Princess Borghese did, to Canova, and made a respectable statue.'

"'She told Lord Boringdon, on his inviting her to his country house, in December, looking at her tablets, that she was engaged every day

until the ninth of April—that she might avoid a country visit.'

"'Exactly, like her. Pray, do you know Hook, the novelist?'

"I replied in the affirmative.

"'His plots are not very original, nor does he display much thought; but he relates his stories well, and introduces his minor incidents with great effect. I could not get him out of my head yesterday. He brings a pretended surveyor of a railroad to the owner of a pet house, telling him he is come to take bearings for a rail-road, which is to proceed right through his property. The alarm he causes is ludicrous and well-sustained. Such incidents seem to be his forte—they say he is an *improvisante?*'

"'Like an Italian; with a rugged material in our language, rendering the task more difficult—his skill in that way is wonderful—he has his joke, good or bad, upon every thing."

"A volume of Saurin's sermons was on the table—the name he pronounced Soree. Mr. Beckford preferred Saurin's to all others.

"'To Massillon's?' I asked.

"'To all others, French or English—Massillon takes higher flights, he preached before crowned heads as he would do before ordinary people—the sermons of neither were like our silken and

scented discourses. I have had a correspondence with a dissenting minister, the Rev. Mr. Jay, upon the badness of the psalms and hymns used in worship, considered as poetical compositions. Some may think this a matter of no moment. One of the popes said it was blasphemous to submit the word of God to the rules of grammatical composition — God should have the best that can be offered in relation to his worship— church and chapel make sad work of their psalmody.'

"He made no further mention of this subject, which must have been curiously treated if he had gone into it at length. His mind was eminently poetical—he had profound ideas upon the wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Being; these he sometimes mingled with his enjoyments of picturesque nature, his love of which was intense, seeing all with a poet's eye—the wilder, the more attractive.

" 'I have sometimes felt unable to separate myself without great difficulty from certain spots that fixed my attention. Night has found me in my noonday resting-place, too far sometimes from the halting-place of my attendants. Carriage, friends, if with me, I have suffered to proceed, and feeling the inclination irresistible, have mounted an attendant's horse, and rode, my heart

exulting, into some romantic mountain gorge, got off, flung myself upon a bed of verdure on the banks of a sparkling stream, and wished the moments I spent there, and the sensations I experienced, to be eternal — sensations with which, I suppose, the couple in Paradise filled their measure of happiness. To me, nothing can surpass in attraction, a hillock in a vineyard at sunset—a peasant's vineyard among the Apennines near a gushing stream of water. I can recall such a spot to my recollection at this moment where I fell into a reverie. I was roused by a great bird flapping his broad sail-like wings over my head—sounds are very distinctly heard from a great distance in mountain solitudes, where the air is rare and transparent. I looked up, and was instantly reminded of the devil's wings, so sail-like in expansion:

l' ali
Che'n guisa hà pur di due gran vele aperte.

The clothing of the Apennines has a thousand gradations of colour; vegetation rises to a great height. The hues of nature made the artists of Italy colourists.'

"I was going into Staffordshire. Mr. Beckford desired me to see the woods of Ilam, on the

borders of Derby.* Had I seen the mountains of North Wales? I had scaled both Snowdon and Cader Idris—I had clambered the Dôle. There was no such panorama besides on earth as that of the Dôle—it was the finest thing mortal vision could comprehend. The vast semicircle—the Dôle the centre—the whole Alps the concave. The intervening field so vast and varied. He had never been able to discover the peak of Snowdon for clouds—he could live very comfortably at the foot of a Welsh mountain, in a cottage, with his books and the indulgence of a horse to range through the wild, craggy valleys. He wondered he had not gone from Fonthill to some of the mountain districts. I asked if the scenery of the rock of Lisbon was sublime. No, it was grandly beautiful."

This proud, rich, gifted man—the spoiled son of fortune—the eccentric and philosophic—who quitted his palace of Fonthill with an indifference worthy of antiquity, declaring he could exchange it for a cottage without a pang—met his death as tranquilly as might be expected from his intellectual and reflective constitution. His temperance and activity prolonged his life to eighty-four,

* I did so, and found the scenery very fine. Out of the way as that district is, it shows how little of home scenery had escaped Mr. Beckford's observation.

in full possession of his faculties—to the last busied in his customary manner. He was occupied with books even after his indisposition commenced—his wonderful vision gratified the love of art that age did not appear to diminish—fortunate in the extent of his acquirements, his enjoyments were proportionably multiplied—fortunate too in surviving the vilest detraction.

CHAPTER IX.

A VISIT FROM A FRIEND—HIS RECEPTION—SIGHT SEEING.

THE following account of a passing visit to Mr. Beckford in 1843 is from a valued artistic friend, in pursuance of a promise repeatedly made, but until then prevented from being fulfilled. It displays much of his manner, and throws additional light upon his mode of receiving his friends, though his peculiar carriage and mode of converse it is in vain to attempt to describe literally, from their being *sui generis*. It is given in the narrator's own words.

"He was not aware," said the narrator, "of my intention; and on my calling with a relative at his house one morning, his servant begged

that we would allow him to defer announcing us for a few minutes, as he had but just returned from his early ride (it was his custom to ride on horseback to the tower, a mile distant, and all uphill, and generally to walk back to breakfast). He was then at breakfast; and if he knew we were there from town, his breakfast would be sent away untouched. Of course we did not wish to interrupt him. After waiting a very short time, we were introduced to him, in the front parlour of his house in the Crescent. He had been sitting, but rose up instantly as we entered, rushing towards us, and holding out both his hands.

"'Well, my dear sir,' said he, 'here you are at last. How delighted I am to meet you in my own territories! Now you shall see with your own eyes whether all the stories I have told you about Lansdown, and which your unbelieving eyes have often betrayed to me you thought either fabulous or very highly coloured, are true or not. Come, what's your first impression?'

"I glanced quickly around the room; and I suppose my looks, or, as he often said, my eyes betrayed that I was slightly disappointed.

"'What! not satisfied! Well, sit down for a moment, and then we'll begin our pilgrimage, O you of little faith!'

"He laughed heartily as he said this. None who ever heard it can forget the complete hilarity and enjoyment of his loud and boisterous laugh. At the first glance, there was little of any artistic consequence in the room. The articles it contained were all in very good taste, and 'pretty' would be the term rightly employed in describing them.

"After talking for a few minutes, and congratulating him on his good looks, I said that I had heard he had bought the house next him; that I supposed his books and curiosities had so outgrown his present house that he was forced to buy another, in order to have a place to put them; and I wished him joy in the amusement it would afford him in fitting it up and decorating it.

"'No, I am not going to fit it up at all; I am going to leave it exactly as it is.'

"'But why so?' I asked. 'Why have you bought it? Perhaps I have been misinformed.'

"'No, I have really bought it; but the reason at present must remain a most profound mystery, quite as deep as Barkiarokh and the other Vathek episodes. But don't be alarmed, restrain your impatience, and in due time you shall know all. Now let's set forth on our pilgrimage.'

"He showed us first the pictures hanging in

the room in which we were. Among these were several fine but small specimens of modern English artists. There was a very good sketch by West, for his large picture of Lear, which he considered, with justice, one of his best productions. There was also a curious and fine picture by an early Italian artist, Sandio Boticelli. He then threw back a curtain; for, with the exception of the outer doors to each suite, the whole of the apartments had curtains instead of doors. We then entered a library, containing some of the most wonderful copies of embellished works it is possible to imagine. It was full of unique large paper copies, with the finest *épreuve d'artistes* of the plates, and in many cases etchings and original drawings were inserted. I remarked in this, as well as in every other room in the house, for, in fact, every room in the house was a library, that the books appeared to be placed without the slightest regard to order. A work of the fifteenth century, probably treating of some curious religious subject, was placed next an edition of La Fontaine, or a work of a similar period. But Mr. Beckford appeared to be able to find anything in a moment, and ran about in evident delight, pulling out one book after another, and exclaiming,

"'Good heaven! did you ever see anything

like this? Look at these delicious impressions! —only see the purity of this paper—here's no trick—no retouching—no washing—everything as pure as the day it was printed.'

"The next room was fitted up in the style of an ancient Grecian library, and the subdued light produced an almost magical effect. Between the ceiling and the top of the book-shelves were arched recesses, on which were placed some most magnificent Etruscan vases. It was altogether a place admirably adapted for study. There were also some most marvellous books, and on a table in the centre choice productions of ancient enamelled ware. Another curtain was thrown back, and we entered a sombre passage, the only light to which was admitted through stained glass.

"'Before,' said Mr. Beckford, 'I bought the next house, this was the extent of my domains, and the room in which I study is that we were last in, and which you most properly call a Grecian library, for so it is. Now, had I not bought this house, I should have been perpetually annoyed by the ticking of some cursed jack, the jingling of some beastly piano, horrid-toned bells tinkling, and so on. The only way to avoid this was by buying the house; and so I bought it, to the infinite annoyance and asto-

nishment of the Bath aristocracy, an odd breed, I believe.'

"We turned to the left in this passage, and entered another room on the ground floor, containing books and some amazingly fine specimens of china. Under the book-shelves were several drawers of oak, all, as everywhere else in the house, unlocked, containing marvellous stores of jewels of all descriptions, including a magnificent pearl necklace and an infinite number of agate and jade cups. We then ascended a dimly-lighted staircase, and came to two drawing-rooms, leading one into the other, stuffed quite full of the choicest productions that ancient or modern art could supply. The walls, except where the books intervened, were covered with magnificent pictures and drawings. Tables of the rarest and choicest marbles were strewn about in positive profusion. In the front room, close to the window, was placed, on a magnificent stand, a wonderfully-carved agate cup, the largest and finest known, which Mr. Beckford valued at many thousand pounds. Everything had its history, which he repeated in the most lively manner; for, as was often the case, he was in exuberantly buoyant spirits, and whenever a stool or a chair was in his way, gave himself no trouble to put it out of the way, but

leaped over it. The chimney-piece of this room was extraordinary. It was formed of marble of a costly quality. Arches had been hollowed out in it, so as to introduce some elegant antique vases of crystal and other materials. As may be supposed, several hours soon slipped away in a mere cursory view of these curiosities; and finding that the time for his afternoon's ride had arrived, I proposed taking leave of him.

"'How long do you stay here?' he asked.

"I replied, that my engagements would compel me to leave early the next morning. He seemed irritated, and declared he would not let me leave Bath until I had seen his tower. Not wishing to offend him, and being anxious to see what he had so often talked enthusiastically about, I agreed to stop another day, and informed him that we were staying at one of the hotels at Bath, and that a lady was with us, whom we should take the liberty of bringing. 'Then,' said he, 'I will send my carriage for you at eleven to-morrow morning: you shall drive up to the tower, look over it, and come back here, and tell me what you think of it: the carriage is yours as long as you stay here. This I call merely a passing call—a real visit of some weeks you still owe me, and the sooner you get out of debt the better shall I be pleased.'

"We took leave, and the next morning we were driven up to the tower. The exterior of this building is too well known to require description. On our arrival, to my infinite surprise, I found his horses waiting at the entrance. His confidential servant was also in attendance, and informed me that 'his honour,' as he invariably termed his master, was waiting at the top of the tower for me. I ran up, and he met me as I reached the top, catching hold of both my hands in his own, and shaking them heartily, he cried:—

"'Welcome to Lansdown Tower, as the old women say, 'long looked for, come at last!' I am delighted to see you up here. Look round; does this disappoint you? Have I exaggerated? ho! I see at once you are pleased—you can't deceive me! that's quite impossible!'

"Unfortunately, the morning was rather hazy, and the prospect was not so enchanting as in fine weather it must necessarily be; but even then it was delightful. The view was most extensive, looking over a beautifully undulating country, and, as he justly observed, one of the very highest interest, as every reader of English history was too well acquainted with to need mentioning.

"'When you have enjoyed this enough for

one morning, we will descend, for we have some wonders to exhibit here, almost passing the bounds of human belief,' he said jestingly.

"Then, laughing loudly, as, bowing to the lady, he preceded us down the circular staircase, covered with rich dark carpet from top to bottom, we descended almost to the base, and entered a room, of the size of which, from the outside, I had not the slightest conception. It was really a good-sized apartment, beautifully proportioned, arranged with hanging drapery in admirable taste, and, like all his other rooms, full of extraordinary specimens of almost every style of art. He was particularly partial to, and expatiated for a long time upon the beauties of a very fine picture by Weenix, which was hung up in this room. He also pointed out some marvellous specimens of Italian marble, which were formed into tables, or made the slabs in front of the windows. From this room we proceeded to an oratory, at the end of which was an ancient figure of a monk and child, admirably sculptured. This oratory had a peculiarly solemn appearance, on account of the 'religious light' that was thrown over it by the means of ground glass in the skylight.

"Leaving the oratory, we entered a library full of copies of rare books, of all descriptions. There

were some most admirable missals, in perfect condition. These he took down, one after another, to my great astonishment both at their beauty and variety. Every book had its own anecdote, either relating to some peculiarity in its execution, some odd accident with respect to its acquisition, or some remarkable difference between that and others of a similar description. On my stating that they appeared innumerable:

"'Oh,' he observed, 'you don't think I talked too highly of my own property—their number is indeed Legion!'

"After passing some time here, he observed that he thought it would be best to depart in order to visit the other apartments in Lansdown Crescent. As we left this library, he observed to the servant in attendance that the place was insufferably hot; and, indeed, the whole tower was heated to an apparently dangerous extent. When we reached the steps he gave his arm to the lady, handed her into the carriage, and waited, with his hat off, till we drove away. His favourite dog, that had run after us over the tower, as if it had been familiar with me, jumped, to his great surprise, into the carriage, and returned with us. He got on horseback, and rode home through his grounds, reaching the house first.

"After waiting a few minutes in the great parlour, he came in, and we again went through the rooms we had seen, and those not seen the day before. One of them contained some charming Polembergs; in another he directed my attention to three large volumes containing a matchless set of the portraits after Van Dyck, which had been purchased for him at the sale of the collection of Count Fries, at Amsterdam, for twelve hundred florins.

"'There,' he said, 'are Vandycks to fall down to and worship. Such glorious impressions can nowhere be found—let's try a volume.'

"Before I could offer to help him, he had pulled one of them out, and notwithstanding its great weight, had run to the window with it. It must be recollected that he was then in his eighty-third year. This volume contained some wonderful prints, and fully bore out the character he had given it. He afterwards pulled out many more magnificent works, and insisted upon not having any aid in carrying them about. After viewing these apartments, we returned to the grand staircase, the walls of which were hung with fine pictures, chiefly portraits of his family and their connections. Among them was a fine portrait of his father in the attitude

of making his celebrated speech, full of spirit and admirable action.

"The staircase led up to a suite of rooms which he called the Duchess of Hamilton's state apartments. Here was a painting by J. Breughel, the figures by Rubens. It was a landscape, with hot-houses, fruits, and flowers, singularly introduced. The oak cabinets here were lined with purple velvet, and filled with rarities.

"In the back room, the first we entered, were several superb and unique volumes of drawings, particularly some of flowers and fruit, most exquisitely painted, and several curious Chinese drawings, among which was a volume containing a series of views of a mandarin's house and gardens, remarkably interesting. In this room there was also a costly and magnificent japan screen, and articles of this most rare style in art, really old and genuine. His own portrait was in this apartment, together with portraits of his mother and others of his relations. The front rooms, and even the bedrooms, were overflowing with books, missals, drawings, pictures, miniatures, rare old china, and other articles of *vertu* of the choicest and rarest description. Over the bookshelves were generally hung fine portraits by ancient masters. There were among them two most astonishing pictures by Holbein

and Bellini. At the end of these rooms was the gallery which he had built over the road to connect that house with one he formerly had on the other side. This gallery was filled also with books, and the blinds being of a pink colour, the light thrown upon it had a very pleasing effect. In one of the windows was a wonderfully fine marble figure of a sleeping child, of which he was very fond, and once said to a friend with a touch of melancholy, 'It is the only son I ever had;' Lady Margaret, no doubt, coming to his recollection, and his untimely loss of her.

"In some of the rooms were vases of the finest flowers, which were constantly renewed. He could not live without having them about him, and he arranged them himself in the most tasteful manner. This habit he continued when in London; and besides his purchases at the suburban nurseries, considerable quantities were every day sent up to him from his own gardens.

"After passing a delightful and instructive day, we left him; but he would not let me go before I promised to come and spend a considerable time with him, as soon as I possibly could.

"I have made no mention of his collection of engravings, for the fact is, that he had really no *regular* collection of them. He bought what-

ever was good, without reference to its being modern or ancient, and without regard to the engraver's name or celebrity. Of course he had, during the long period he had been buying, accumulated a vast quantity. These were scattered all over his house in drawers, without the slightest attempt at arrangement, so that even with his extraordinary memory it was sometimes a matter of difficulty for him to find what he wanted. His fancy seemed to be that in every room in the house there should be articles of the same description, so that if he wanted to look at fine old china, Etruscan vases, Limoges ware, Raffaelle china, books, missals, or prints, in whatever room he might be, there were always specimens of each description. The presents that had been made to him were exceedingly curious. Thus, he had a book of prayers printed for the King of Spain's own use, which his Majesty had given him; and he prided himself much upon an invaluable Etruscan vase of great beauty, which the Duke of Hamilton had not long before procured and presented to him."

CHAPTER X.

CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING THE LANSDOWN ENGRAVING COLLECTIONS.— LATEST CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS AGENT.

THE singular anxiety of Mr. Beckford respecting art, may be judged from his correspondence with one of his agents, in regard to certain articles he wished to add to his collection, in this case principally engravings. He displayed the same kind of order upon other branches of art, and, in fact, in all his transactions. Some of the communications at the age of eighty-four preceded his decease not more then a week or two. The date of the first is July 2, 1840.

"All safe and satisfactory as far as I have yet seen, for I lose not a moment in despatching the enclosed £200, which clears the sale account, viz. £171 9s. 0d., and leaves a balance of

£28 11s. 0d. in your hands, ready in case I should select from the cargo sent on inspection, which is extremely probable.

"Most of the Van Dykes, Ravennas, Ghisi, &c. &c. &c. are already here over and over again. Apollo, by M. R., Stanier, by Hollar, and so forth.

"Expecting to learn by return of post of the safe reception of the enclosed,

"I am yours, my dear sir,

"Most sincerely and most cordially,

"W. B."

"Monday, 6th July, 1840.

"The Claudes are not vanity 'morceaux,' but highly instructive and interesting to me, so I am quite satisfied. Had I been at your elbow, Sir —— should not have carried off the musée drawing.

"I now return the portfolio, having made my selection. Barnard's Stanier in my russia-bound book is inferior to yours, which I therefore retain.

"The Fries volumes may boast of all your *very fine* Vandyck rarities, with the addition of the *original* etching of Titian and his Bonaroba."

"I am most grateful, my dear sir, for your

clear, intelligent information about S. Hill,* and ardently wish a sale would give me an opportunity of profiting by it; but alas! this marvellous sale still remains enveloped in such *dense clouds*, that I doubt whether the potency of Magnus Apollo, G. Robins himself, will be able to dispel them.

"Pray inform ——, who, I am happy to find, understands the immutable etiquette of the court of Lansdown Bagdad, that I purchased the Perugino of Pizzetta (a famous picture scraper), some twenty or thirty years ago. He told me it came directly from Perugia, but from what church or collection took decent care not to certify.

"The price mentioned, viz. 800, is correct.

"In case you should pay the S. H. collection another visit, favour me with a few more observations. I only wish in the last instance they had extended to several pages.

"In corresponding with you, my dear sir, I shall never call, 'hold, enough.'"

Mr. Beckford had himself drawn imitations of two of Swaneveldt's small etchings, so successfully as almost to deceive even an experienced eye. The following note will show his own appreciation of them.

* Strawberry Hill.

"A most decisive and ample report, for which I have great pleasure in offering my heartiest thanks. What a slough of trash we have escaped from!

"Fine impressions of the ovals are so desirable to me *in particular*, that I cannot help regretting them, even at the high price they fetched. I have an incomplete set of 22, to make up the 24 I added two '*de ma façon*,' not copies but imitations, so much in the spirit of Swaneveldt, that when you see them you will be induced to believe them by his own hand,—this sounds strange and presumptuous, but it is not, though a little presumptuous or so, more strange than true.

"452 (the Lagunes) should be SECURED for me MOST POSITIVELY—511 (the Parrot) ditto, ditto, 540 ditto, ditto, 564, being genuine, I must also have.

"The Elsheimers have turned out what I expected. I will not conclude without authorising you to secure ALL the lots above mentioned upon the best terms you are able; and again express my grateful sense of the minute attention paid my rather long-winded and tiresome communications."

The following proves how desirous he was of possessing some of the treasures Horace Wal-

pole had collected, and how much he was annoyed when anything he had set his heart upon there escaped him. The Callots there were bound up in two little volumes, and were worth from fifteen to twenty pounds. His agent, however, pushed them up to forty guineas, and then dropped them. On consideration, for at first he seemed satisfied at losing them, he regretted that they had not been secured for him.

"I propose coming to town very shortly, and hope we shall meet next Wednesday, 9th, for 'despatch of business' between the hours of 4 and 5.

"You will find me all agog, ALL ARDOUR, ALL INTREPIDITY."

"The S. Hill wonderment is so much upon the decline, having been written down by the 'Times' and other papers most vigorously, that I should not be surprised if good bargains were to be met with on the day of trial.

"No doubt you have *scrutinously* gone through and through all the portfolios; your observations would be highly acceptable.

"Are not the Steerologias, Lots 100 and 102, remarkably fine? I doubt whether mine are as good.

"117.—Views of London, &c., called very curious. Are they so?

"8th day, 128.—A strange *omnium gatherum*, Wilton Gardens, Collaert, &c., and what say you to 129, Brantome, Mariette, &c.?

"6th day, 46.—I hope the little Callot will not turn out *populous*, but even if it does, it must *not escape me*—pray take good care of that. Remember to put aside for me an architectural drawing by Perino del Vaga, with statues in niches; think of me when any drawings of this kind turn up. I have some already of this class, very fine.

"62, 8th day.—A folio of prints, &c., from the antique, in the Cabinet de Girardon, *I must have*. The impressions are good, particularly the portrait,—it is scarce—MISS IT NOT.

"If you have leisure to delve deep into the round tower ruin, many and many interesting odds and ends (in my way) may be picked up.

"After all, such an opportunity as this may not occur again in a hurry."

"Lansdown, Tuesday, 30th May, 1842.

"I can easily conceive the majesty displayed by my glorious Apollo upon this great occasion.

"Though I regret the Callots, I have *not a word to say against* your having dropped them (probably at the nick of time) upon another mirror of impudence, the eternal T.

"I trust the Dog star may cease raging with such violence before the print portion of the sale comes on."

"23rd May, 1843.

"I wonder how long the rod intended for our shoulders is to remain in pickle—when will soaking and vamping be completed?

"Should the Dog star and Duke* star continue to rage, and the hornets follow us from the S. Hill round-house to the metropolitan scene of auction with freshly pointed stings and renewed virulence, inflammation must ensue, as it did that miserable day when the Callots I had so right entirely set my *whole* heart upon, were ravished away from me, to my *utter surprise*, and *infinite* annoyance.

"Have you discovered *yet* into whose hands they have *really* fallen? I shall *never* cease regretting them most bitterly,—*never!—never!* 50 or 60 guineas are more easily found than such genuine mellow impressions as were contained in the little greasy bit of a second volume, or such truly original sketches as rendered the first one of the daintiest morsels that ever excited my appetite.

* "Witness the 540 portrait." (This alludes to the picture of the Duke of Suffolk, and Mary, Queen of France, purchased at a preposterous price by the Duke of Bedford, at the Strawberry Hill Sale.)

"I hope, ere long, to receive the five days Catalogue, with your observations upon it.

"Yours ever, &c."

"Lansdown, 31st May, 1842.

"I return the portfolio *intact*, the Hollars I particularly fancy are here already, and so are most of the Faithornes.

"I dread the impending Robins-ism. God knows how we shall fare, but I keep up my spirits as well as I can. The S. H. treasures (just arrived) are safe in Lansdown tower.

"When you see the Lansdown Hollars, (which I sincerely hope you will, one day or other), you will be convinced, I think, my dear sir, that the S. are a little too black and brilliant.

"I grow more and more nervous every hour, when I reflect upon the ferocious mad bull tossings we may expect at the next Strawberry conflict.

"My vocation for Papes and Elstrackes is not sufficiently fervent to conquer the disgust, the nausea, the abhorrence with which the last S. H. proceedings have inspired me. The fine portraits specified in your choice little list are absolutely beyond my reach, nor shall I stand on tiptoe to reach them.

"Girardon? — yes — and now and then a crumb or two of comfort which you may possibly pick up.

"I must quiet myself with my humble impressions as well as I can. The hot sun and the blighting east winds are drying up both myself and my territories; the change upon Lansdown in the space of the last four or five days is frightful.

"Measles, influenza, &c., are playing the devil in this neighbourhood, and every other. I really think poor Lord Bungleton, who swung himself out of this fussy world t'other day, has the best of it. Keep yourself as cool as you can in every respect, my dear sir, and don't commit any feverish extravagancies."

"Lansdown, Thursday, June 16, 1842.

"MY DEAR SIR,—That you have made a good selection I make no doubt; that I shall be much pleased to look them over whenever you please to send a few specimens down, is equally certain; and that the horrible heat of Robins's Hell-antichamber may not force you to commit high flown extravagancies, equally to be supplicated.

"Sift and resift the Vertues, he interests me particularly. I glory in his pen drawing of

Philip and Mary. Curious proofs, curious views, curious scraps of antiquities, are well suited to this very original-looking abode, which reminds one of some of his favourite old palatial mansions. Remember Perino del Vaga, &c., when the drawings come on. I shall be curious to learn what you discover in that department.

"Although I am not *mad* after Papes and Elstrackes, I am not dead to print feeling, and should be thankful for a few grains of information how you are getting on,

"I see by the Morning Post's unceasing Strawberriana, that a well-known 'true collector' has been laying about him with all the vigour of youth.

"Do not forget that I am extremely partial to Vertue, and should anything very interesting by him present itself, I should like to see it very much."

"Lansdown, Friday, 5th April, 1844.

"I cannot say, my dear sir, that such copious showers are refreshing—they overwhelm one.

"I do not feel inspired to give Dutch prices for *unique* Rembrandts—Not I.

"Amongst Seguier's A. Durers I notice 62, St. Hubert, called superb; 81, Lady and Gen-

tleman, ditto; 84, Knight of Death, if fine, most desirable, G—— C—— having filched mine, which was Haring's.

"129, 130. Naiwincx sounds, and is probably most temptatious.

"199. The Corn Field, 1st state.

"454. Rembrandt's Mill, called MOST BRILLIANT.

"Grand curiosities, it seems, among the Vandyck etchings, 514, 16, and 18, head only.

"I suppose there will be no reaching the Claudes, except on tip-toe, and straining one's ankles.

"734. Swaneveldt's sacred subjects, some proofs. Q. What proofs?

"Nothing among the books worth my attention.

"In the picture catalogue I notice,—

"77. A Teniers.

"80. V. Heyden.

"88. Ghezzi.

"94. Ruysdael. Q. What size and quality?

"102 and 3. Breemberg. Q. Ditto?

"If you can snatch a sight of the Collection to report immediately, so much the better; if not, I can wait with tolerable patience. I shall look over the remaining Catalogues to-morrow."

It would not be supposed that the love of art

which distinguished the subject of this memoir, continued so late in life; and it will scarcely be credited that the regard for its productions may be said only to have ceased at his advanced age with his expiring sigh. He died on the second of May, 1844; yet, on the eighth of April he sent a reply to a letter he had received from one of his favourite commissionaires in London, though too unwell to write himself, employing an amanuensis.

"Lansdown, Monday, 8th April, 1844.

"What! 30 and 40, and perhaps 50, for the sets of Naiwincx! I am not disposed to pay so absurd a price for them, nor for the Mill, or A. Durer, &c., &c. I shall not meddle with the fine Ruysdael, but if the nicely-toned Teniers turns out of a size to suit a place here, which I have in my eye, we must stretch a point to secure it. Be so kind as to send me the exact dimensions.

"The French collection sounds stupendous. I am not partial to Desnoyer, but very much so to Eddinck, Bolswert, Andrans, &c. Of Vandyke I have great plenty and good.

"In the stubble field of the 'refined Collector,' something, and at no very extravagant cost, may probably be gleaned for me. What are the

Elsheimers, 12 and 13, 1st day? 170, 366, 438 and 9, 447, 509, 511, 529, ornaments; 573, architectural. I have several compositions from the pen of the master of the household, but none, as yet, from the graver of the master of the mouse trap. (He then enumerates certain catalogue numbers, and concludes.) You have not yet reported the Breembergs at the great conservator's; pray do, and believe me, my dear sir,

"Most constantly yours,

"W. B."

The following is probably the last letter Mr. Beckford ever dispatched upon any one of his favourite pursuits. It was dated Lansdown, April 15, 1844, and sent to Mr. Smith of Lisle Street.

"There are several articles in the Dubois sale well worthy of being fastened upon, not mediocre uniques, but the productions of lofty minds; for example, 59, Bandit, after Poussin; 60, after Seb. Bourdon; 300, G. Edelnick, after P. de Champagne, sublime most probably; 212, Le Cavalier de la mort.

"My St. Hubert is wretched; the first fine one should be secured whenever it turns up.

219, La Nativité, tres rare. Q. Whether tres belle?

"It will be impossible for me to think of coming to town, therefore must depend upon your reports entirely.

"Waiting the measurement of the Teniers, and observations upon the Breembergs, I am, my dear sir,

"Most cordially,
"W. B."

When he was in suspense about anything being secured for him, his emotion was beyond bounds, even going so far as irritation. The following, when in good humour, but anxious, was one of his notes to his agent, relating to an Edinburgh sale.

"13th April, 1843.

"What! not a line! not a word about the Edinburgh sale? Where are the Flamens? the Grimaldis, the etc., etc., etceteras? All the echoes of Lansdown are repeating, 'Where? where?'"

He thought slightly of Chantry as a sculptor, admitting that he did "pretty" things; perhaps a just appreciation, as his larger works are really

without much merit, and display no genius. He was very sarcastic on the productions of the younger Bacon, and on Wyatt's exhibitions. He both admired and extolled Flaxman, and regarded, as one proof of his great merit, the little regard shown by the English public, always so deficient in taste, to his really classical works. He was better appreciated, and was almost the only English sculptor whose works were known and valued abroad.

Here a few circumstances relative to the sale of half-a-dozen of his paintings of high merit it may not be uninteresting to detail. When he had first completed Lansdown Tower, it was furnished principally with ebony and red woods in a taste by no means as severely classical, but perhaps richer than it was left at his decease. He afterwards refurnished it, and sold off most of the articles which stood there originally, some of which were of rare value, and brought large prices, many being purchased for foreign collections. He determined also to sell off his pictures about the same period. This was well known, and it would appear that the ministry then in office got an M.P. to bargain for them. The agent went to work in the shop-keeping way. This did not suit Mr. Beckford, who never haggled with anybody buying or selling.

If he purchased a picture, he named the sum he would give to the dealer; and if his offer was refused, he at once declined the purchase. He generally sold in the same way, though his impatience of temperament made him sometimes concede on the ground of an instant "yea" or "nay." An application was made to him for the purchase of the St. Catherine, the Garofalo, the Mazzolino, and the Doge Loredano in the Tower, together with the Perugino, that with another picture or two, among which was a Waterloo, composed the number he intended to sell. Mr. Beckford's reply was, that for the Raphael and Mazzolino he would have eight thousand guineas, adding the Garofalo ten thousand, the Raphael, Mazzolino, Garofalo, Bellini, Perugino, and a Gaspar Poussin fifteen thousand. For the Poussin alone he demanded one thousand eight hundred. This negociation was broken off by the agents, and the chaffering with the "job-masters," as he called the employers of the party set to arrange the affair, in the management of which he seemed somewhat offended. In the course of the subsequent negociation of his agent with others, Mr. Holford had thought of purchasing one or more of the paintings.

"I had fully made up my mind," wrote Mr.

Beckford, "to placing the Grand Gaspar in the space now occupied by the two uprights of the windows, while three pictures I intend most positively to sell:" probably those occupying the space. His agent then wrote that Mr. —— thought the pictures valued too high, and that they might be purchased for two thousand five hundred or three thousand guineas. Mr. Beckford replied, "Well, be it so, provided not a moment be wasted in nigglenation or consultation—a word and a blow—he shall have them upon his own terms, as it were, at the very moderate sum of two thousand seven hundred and fifty guineas. If his unlucky stars prevent his instantaneously closing with this bargain, I cannot help it, I have done my best for him, and given him a chance, which, if he has other advisers than interested dealers, he will seize with eagerness, and thank me from his heart for such a favourable opportunity. I desire you will immediately pursue this fresh negociation in the manner best calculated to meet the object."

At private views of works of art he was well aware that many pseudo-amateurs, or with the French "*amateur brocanteurs*," were watching him, and endeavouring to glean his opinion, in order that they might secure some good work of art, according to the opinion of so practised a con-

noisseur. These parties he delighted to mystify, and once puzzled a friend by loudly praising a trumpery picture, and puffing it up as one of the finest specimens of modern art. "I could not," said Mr. Beckford's friend, unaware of his reason for so doing, "imagine why he was puffing up this work, when so many really fine pictures were about. On our return home, I asked him what all this meant, when he said, 'Didn't you see that fool B—— standing close behind me? I'll take you anything he buys that trumpery, and thinks he will make a good speculation of it.'" The party in question did really buy the picture. This is only one instance, but it happened frequently, and nothing could exceed his delight when he found that some pretended patrons and affected judges of the fine arts had been deceived by the opinion he had expressed.

Mr. Beckford's regularity with regard to the settlement of accounts was remarkable. Whatever he purchased he almost always paid for before he took it away; and when, by accident, he was indebted to any of his tradesmen, he was uneasy and out of humour until the account was discharged. When he was in town he always carried about with him a considerable sum of money in Bank notes, arranged in envelopes

according to their value. Outside each envelope was the number and date of every note it contained; and when he paid one away, he put a mark against the number, and wrote the name of the party to whom he paid it.

He was no illiberal patron of modern art. He hated too, and with reason, all those things which tended to keep down genius, such as mob judgments and jobbing art-unions. A picture of Landseer's, called "Suspense," once took his fancy greatly. It was in his way exactly. He found, to his mortification, that it had been painted for Mr. Sheepshanks. He commissioned the keeper of the gallery where it had been exhibited, to endeavour to discover what price had been paid for it, and then to offer the proprietor four times the amount, whatever it was. He was unsuccessful in obtaining his wish.

He was attached to the productions of the English artists of the last and early part of the present century. With Sir Joshua Reynolds he had been intimate, and his portrait by that great master, at Bath, was one of the finest of the smaller pictures he possessed. Sir Joshua had himself been pleased with the portrait, and just as it was finished threw in a light sort of halo behind the head, having something of the effect of a nimbus. It was engraved in the

"Journey to Alcobaça and Batalha," but the print gives no idea of the beauty of the picture.

It was amusing to accompany him to one of the private artistic views. His eagle glance caught at once what was best worth looking at, and a few minutes sufficed to run over even a large assemblage of paintings. When, as sometimes occurred, there was nothing to interest him, he was much out of humour, and was certain to run out of the place in a passion. Once, at the rooms of the Society of British Artists, he trotted round the first, stopping occasionally and grunting out an exclamation of contempt, and when he had finished, observed, "Nothing worth a rush here, let's try another." The same thing took place with regard to the second room; and on entering the third, he ran into the middle, cast a rapid glance around, and then absolutely bawled out, "Good heavens! this is the most cursed of them all! The face of badness can no further go, let's be off;" and he ran hurriedly down stairs to his carriage.

APPENDIX.

Vol. ii. Page 101.

THE death of the great grandfather of Mr. Beckford, in another account, is said to have occured in 1710, from accident. Peter Beckford, the son of the Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica, was chairman of the House of Assembly, and during a riotous debate, was disobeyed, when he called the members to order, on which he rose with the intention of vacating the chair, having moved an adjournment. The members barred the door and held him in the chair, that it might not be vacated. The chairman called out lustily for help. His aged father heard the call, and went into the apartment of Lieutenant-Governor Handasyd, who had succeeded to the office, and alarmed him. The Lieutenant-Governor snatched up his sword, bade the sentinels follow him, and rushing into the hall, dissolved the Assembly. The elder Beckford alarmed, slipped his foot and fell down the staircase, and the injury he received, combined with his furious agitation, caused his death. The personal property he left was valued at £478,000, and the real property at as much more, in all to £956,000. The largest part fell to the father of the Lord Mayor Beckford. The latter having succeeded soon after his father's death to the property of his elder brother, and to 10,000 a year at the death of his brother Richard, the third

son, he might well have left to the late Mr. Beckford, a minor for ten years or more, the large fortune to which he came. In 1739, the Beckford estates were the largest in Jamaica. Bad management by agents, chancery cases, and the depreciation of West India property, rendered what had been once so valuable of comparatively little worth.

LINES ON THE PICTURE OF ST. KATHARINE, BY RAPHAEL, AT LANSDOWN, NOW IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY. See Page 313, Vol. ii.

Daughter of piety! to whom are given
Hope that allures, and faith that wafts to heaven,
The christian Niobe, whose heavenward eyes
Reflect the pearly dew of Paradise:
Sure such a mien, so affluent in bliss,
Can owe no fealty* to a world like this!
Around, beneath, autumnal hues appear,
The mournful heralds of the expiring year.
Thus with the pure in heart prepared to greet
Heaven's sapphire pavement with her dust-freed feet,
She waits the martyr's crown, and casts away
Earth and its toys, the playthings of decay.

In horrid menace close beside her stand,
The instruments of torture's fierce command,
The inflexile wheel to which the limbs are bound,
'Till life's warm stream bursts from the empurpled wound;
The massive iron, crushing bone and vein,
Into a shapeless mass of quivering pain;
The sinking pulse, the shrieks for mercy sent
The fluttering heart, life ebbing, fibres rent,
The death-damp on the temples, and the chill
That wrestles with hot fever ere it kill,

* Altered from "childhood," at Mr. Beckford's suggestion, "to fealty."

While persecution mocking agony,
Even death protracts from fear lest suffering die—
What cannot all appal a soul so meek
With modesty enshrined upon her cheek,
Seeming a gentle flower, so fair and sweet
The summer blast may lay it at our feet?
Not all, nor more than these—such is the might
Of heavenly love, in kindness infinite.
The cross allays fear's heart-appalling strife,
Faith lifts the veil that hides eternal life.*
Salvation's sun breaks out with quenchless beam,
And hosts seraphic chant the sufferer's name
To silver harps, whose music's healing sound
Attains the martyr's ear on earthly ground,
Stills apprehension, quells even terror's frown,
And makes the reeking wheel a couch of down.

Such is the tale this wondrous canvass tells,
The sight enchanting with mysterious spells,
Beauty divine, reflecting through the art,
That opes forgotten treasures of the heart,
Such his, archangel named, whose sunny mind
All earthly light exhausting, left behind
This his soul's vision, ere his spirit fled,
In manhood young, to join the illustrious dead,
And blend with holier beauty, where more free—
Time having lapsed into eternity—
The heavenly hosts he may in glory trace
With heaven's own colors, every beaming face
Brightened with rays from that majestic throne,
That "dark with bright excessive," stands alone,
Where never angel eyes may dare the blaze,
Where reigns the Ancient of Eternal Days!
1835.

Mr. Bedford, pencil in hand, marked "Into a mass of quivering pain. Good of one mashed on the wheel —horrible! Breaking bone after bone of the living with an iron bar—a pause to increase suffering. Man

* Ditto, from "Faith draws the veil that shades eternal life."

is a devil after all. I will shew you the scene in one of Callot's etchings." Afterwards reading the quotation "dark with bright excessive." "Aye, Milton—Milton, gloriously great he is, Michael Angelo and Raffaelle together," repeating a number of lines of the Paradise Lost as freshly as if he had been twenty years younger.

In many respects his character was contradictory. He was exceedingly irritable and impatient at little annoyances and disappointments, while he bore great ones with truly philosophic fortitude. In his religious ideas he seemed deeply impressed with the benevolence and justice of God, but he appeared to regard very lightly those ceremonials which the mass of mankind esteem the essence of religion—those formalities which do not outlive in the mind the momentary impression of their performance. He contemplated death without fear, and said he thought he might live to a hundred; but the longer a man lived, the more he would have to answer for hereafter. He never intended to be buried, but to lie above ground, and he had that sarcophagus made accordingly, in which his body now reposes. When I said to him it was no better than a little delay in becoming dust, "Is not that the case with the world itself, that has but its day?" From which it was evident his peculiar inhumation was from no idea of escaping the common end of all things, but merely to make himself an exception to a general rule.—*Letter to Editor.*

NOTICE OF LETTERS FROM ITALY, BY WILLIAM BECKFORD, ESQ. See Page 309, Vol. ii.

"This work is from the pen of our accomplished fellow-citizen, Mr. Beckford, who has been long distinguished in the world of letters, if not by the quantity of his productions, by the far more important adjunct of their high quality. Half a century ago this gentle-

man published the 'Tale of Caliph Vathek,' in French. That work is one of a very high order: rich in fancy, vigorous in style, and keen in satire. A gloomy grandeur of imagery pervades it, which bespeaks a mind familiar with lofty imaginings, and a vein of thought very different from that which belongs to ordinary character. Having obtained high literary reputation by this work, a reputation justly founded, Mr. Beckford seems to have been satisfied with the experiment he made. In early life, becoming satiated with the vanity of letters, he turned to other pursuits in search of that variety which the possession of a vast fortune and fine taste in a peculiarly constituted mind only made it more difficult to supply. The edifice at Fonthill was a remarkable pile in magnitude and grandeur of conception. It was a monastical building, completed in a few years by one individual, such as in olden time cost many generations to accomplish. That a portion of the work was executed in an unstable manner, was the fault of the builder rather than of the designer. Yet Fonthill thus dilapidated, and the mode in which the grounds have been defaced, having been purchased by a miserly character for the purpose of turning their very shadows into money, could not have made such a mind as that the author of Vathek must possess, very unhappy. It was but an illustration of his work—of the winding up of all with which man or his labours are connected, the sum of the designated end of human vanity.

"These 'Sketches' are of peculiar interest, they are faithful pictures of that which is no more. They are descriptions of scenes and manners, that time, the spoiler, has erased from social existence. Were it alone from their furnishing us with contrasts between time past and present, they would be valuable. But they are more than this: they speak mind of a rare order—they exhibit a philosophical view of the pageantry which, in the interval since they were written, has been wholly extinguished—they mark of how little moment are those things which are deemed objects most desirable by the multitude palling upon the mind which is of a superior caste, fatigued with what the world calls pleasure,

and recoiling upon itself for the medicine that must keep the soul from sickening unto death under lassitude of enjoyment, and the conviction of all being vanity. It is this lassitude which has driven minds destitute of resources in religion or philosophy, into excesses fatal to themselves, and in nothing does the advantage of a cultivated intellect appear stronger. The mind at length recurs again to that in which it once found relief, albeit after a long interval of years, and its early acquisitions administer the remedy to its distempered state. But this may well be called digression from the subject. Mr. Beckford's descriptions are vivid and concise; they are never diluted or wire-drawn, and they never fatigue. Our author looks upon all he sees in his youth with the eye rather of the autumn than of the spring of existence. He examines everything with a conviction of its insubstantiality, and he finds the gaudy glitter of courts, the associations of storied greatness, and the remnants of ancient glory, furnish the same homily. It is not that art misses its due share of notice, or that the love of the beautiful is wanting in our author; no such thing—he is enthusiastic in his regard for both, as his taste is beyond impugning; but there seems to overshadow all the feeling that asks, 'to what mysterious object do these things tend?' There is throughout the sketches a sustained spirit, evidently lifted above what it contemplates —a spirit that the gorgeousness of St. Peter's, the splendour of a carnival in the city of the sea, or the association of the 'mother of dead empires' herself cannot detach from the truth of its conviction of their nothingness.

"The style of these sketches is not only in itself excellent, but, in relation to the subject, surpassingly good. It is full of rich illustrations, that give sharpness to the outline, like those apparently careless touches from the pencil of a great artist, that seem little in themselves, and yet afford all the grace and beauty of the drawing. Mr. Beckford writes poetry in prose. His concentrated sentences are read like glowing verse, redolent with the charms that the more they are tasted the more we crave. How fine is the following description of Rome! How

much does it contain in a little! How much does it exceed all the wearying descriptions of minute-noting travellers! How full is the effect! To us the melancholy sonnet of Quevedo, entitled, 'A Roma sepultuda in sas ruinas,' alone recalls the same melancholy feeling.

"'We set out in the dark. Morning dawned over the Lago di Vico; its waters, of a deep ultramarine blue, and its surrounding forests catching the rays of the rising sun. It was in vain I looked for the cupola of St. Peter's upon descending the mountains beyond Viterbo. Nothing but a sea of vapours was visible.

"'At length they rolled away, and the spacious plains began to show themselves, in which the most warlike of nations reared their seat of empire. On the left, afar off, rises the rugged chain of the Apennines, and on the other side a shining expanse of ocean terminates the view. It was upon this vast surface so many illustrious actions were performed, and I know not where a mighty people could have chosen a grander theatre. Here was space for the march of armies, and verge enough for encampments; levels for martial games, and room for that variety of roads and causeways that led from the capital to Ostia. How many triumphant legions have trodden these pavements! how many captive kings! What throngs of cars and chariots once glittered on their surface! Savage animals dragged from the interior of Africa! And the ambassadors of Indian princes, followed by their exotic train, hastening to implore the favour of the senate!

"'During many ages this eminence commanded almost every day such illustrious scenes; but all are vanished; the splendid tumult is passed away; silence and desolation remain. Dreary flats thinly scattered over with ilex, and barren hillocks crowned by solitary towers, were the only objects we perceived for several miles. Now and then we passed a few black ill-favoured sheep straggling by the way side, near a ruined sepulchre, just such animals as an ancient would have sacrificed to the Manes. Sometimes we crossed a brook, whose ripplings were the only sounds which broke the

general stillness, and observed the shepherds' huts on its banks propped up with broken pedestals and marble friezes. I entered one of them, whose owner was abroad tending his herds, and began writing upon the sand and murmuring a melancholy song. Perhaps the dead listened to me from their narrow cells. The living I can answer for: they were far enough removed.

"'You will not be surprised at the dark tone of my musings in so sad a scene, especially as the weather lowered; and you are well acquainted how greatly I depend upon skies and sunshine. To-day I had no blue firmament to revive my spirits; no genial gales, no aromatic plants, to irritate my nerves, and lend at least a momentary animation. Heath and a greyish kind of moss are the sole vegetation which covers this endless wilderness. Every slope is strewed with the relics of a happier period; trunks of trees, shattered columns, cedar beams, helmets of bronze, skulls, and coins, are frequently dug up together.

"'I cannot boast of having made any discoveries, nor of sending you any novel intelligence. You knew before how perfectly the environs of Rome were desolate, and how completely the Papal government contrives to make its subjects miserable. But who knows that they were not just as wretched in those boasted times we are so fond of celebrating? All is doubt and conjecture in this frail existence; and I might as well attempt proving to whom belonged the mouldering bones which lay dispersed around me, as venture to affirm that one age is more fortunate than another. Very likely the poor cottager under whose roof I reposed, is happier than the luxurious Roman, upon the remains of whose palace, perhaps, his shed is raised: and yet that Roman flourished in the purple days of the empire, when all was wealth and splendour, triumph and exultation.'

"What are tomes of antiquarian trash to a volume like this, which speaks the poetry of the heart! Mr. Beckford has seized the starry lights in the painting, and brought out the bold beauties, without the petty details of the picture, which, after all, do but embarrass. The

equal eye with which our author looks upon society is another charm in the work. The musical efforts of an obscure Italian musician, or of 'a fiddling peer,' would be viewed as the product of two human animals upon its own merits alone. The graces which common travellers always see in rank or title are in Mr. Beckford's eye nothing, arising in some respects from his own position in life, but more, we take it, from a philosophic feeling for truth. Mark the following description of Naples, and the things they called royalty there: —

"'The shrubby, variegated shore of Posilipo drew my attention to the opposite side of the bay. It was on those very rocks, under those tall pines, Sannazaro was wont to sit by moonlight, or at peep of dawn, composing his marine eclogues. It is there he still sleeps; and I wished to have gone immediately and strewed coral over his tomb, but I was obliged to check my impatience, and hurry to the palace in form and gala. A courtly mob had got thither upon the same errand, daubed over with lace, and most notably beperiwigged. Nothing but bows and salutations were going forward on the staircase, one of the largest I ever beheld, and which a multitude of prelates and friars were ascending with awkward pomposity. I jostled along to the presence chamber, where his Majesty was dining alone in a circular enclosure of fine clothes and smirking faces. The moment he had finished, twenty long necks were poked forth, and it was a glorious struggle amongst some of the most decorated who first should kiss his hand, the great business of the day. Everybody pressed forward to the best of their abilities. His Majesty seemed to eye nothing but the end of his nose, which is doubtless a capital object. Though people have imagined him a weak monarch, I beg leave to differ in opinion, since he has the boldness to prolong his childhood and be happy, in spite of years and conviction. Give him a boar to stab and a pigeon to shoot at, a battledore and an angling rod, and he is better contented than Solomon in all his glory, and will never discover, like that sapient sovereign, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. His courtiers in general have rather a barbaric appearance, and differ

little in the character of their physiognomies from the most savage nations. I should have taken them for Calmucks or Samoieds, had it not been for their dresses and European finery.' "

The remainder of the article contains extracts too numerous to afford them space here. A reference to the work itself may be made for them, as their accompanying text is unimportant.

THE END.

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